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MANDELL CREIGHTON, Bp. of London

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Sometime Bishop of London

EDITED BY LOUISE CREIGHTON

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PREFACE.

THE sermons of Dr. Creighton that remain in a condition fit for publication can at best only give an imperfect idea of the nature of his preaching. As a rule he preached extempore, and reports of his sermons were only taken on occasions of public importance, and even then were naturally printed in a condensed form. Of the sermons which contained his regular teaching, delivered in his Northumbrian parish or in Worcester Cathedral, no record remains save his own very scanty notes.

In this volume some of his early sermons, preached before he acquired the habit of preaching extempore, are included. The remainder are either sermons given before the Universities, which he always carefully wrote

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out, or sermons preached on some special occasion.

Whenever possible, the date and occasion of the sermon is given.

LOUISE CREIGHTON.

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I.

PEACE.

PREACHED AT SYDENHAM ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1872.

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.—*Phil.* iv. 7.

IT is a true feeling of the cravings of the human heart at all times and in all places, that has led the universal Church to utter this prayer of St. Paul for the Philippians at the end of her most solemn service, that the believer may depart with the hope of God's blessing upon him, with the desire for God's peace to brighten the future of his chastened life. Peace, is it not what men have always longed for, what our own age, with its perpetual turmoil and its unceasing strain, makes us of to-day especially desire with an exaggerated enthusiasm? Peace, is it not in some form or another the aspiration of us all? Do we not even excuse our present unnatural bustle and unrest by saying that the more we do now, the shorter will be the time during which it will be necessary to do it; that the harder we work at present, the sooner we shall have got all we want, and may rest and be quiet for the

65.

remainder of our days? Peace for the weary hands and the exhausted brain, freedom from excessive wear and tear, opportunities at least for quiet and repose—it is the aim of all classes of society, it is what we all want, though we own with a sigh that it seems almost unattainable, that the necessities of life which spring up in increasing number around us every step we take in advance are inexorable in their demands, and that we cannot hope permanently to escape such remorseless masters. Hence we are content to be always restless, we have gradually lost the capacity for enjoying the repose which we profess to desire: our very amusements consist in excitement rather than in rest: the word "distraction" has gradually gained the same meaning among us as "recreation": our leisure moments are spent in rushing to and fro, in hurrying from one place to another in the vain expectation that quiet has some definite local habitation, if it were only our lot happily to light upon it. Our very love for what we call "nature" has received a sickly tinge from our feverish desire to free ourselves from everything that can suggest our ordinary life, and we found our admiration for the beauties of natural objects upon the sweet reflection that, at all events, they are not men and women. We draw a distinction between "man" and "nature," and regard the works of nature as peculiarly the works of God, without committing ourselves to any opinion as to the creator of man, or the author of man's life. Truly society, as a whole, seems, in

spite of the solemn benediction which it weekly hears, to have its heart and mind too little kept by that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Now this is in no ways as it should be, and this fact would in itself be proof, if proof were needed, of the inadequate way in which as yet the Christian idea has been comprehended by society as a whole. For the Gospel of Christ is most emphatically a Gospel of peace; and peace is amongst the chiefest of its promises. "The Prince of Peace" was one of the dearest titles of that Saviour whose birth was so longingly expected by His people: "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men" was the glad song by which the holy birth was announced to the world: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" was the dearest promise that thrilled through the ears of weary men: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you" was the cheering assurance left to His sad Disciples in His last talk with them before His crucifixion: and "Peace be unto you" is His first solemn greeting when He appears to His Apostles as their risen Lord. True, there are sayings in His teaching that speak of troubles and woe as the believer's portion: true, He who said "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," said also "I came not to send peace but a sword". But in this was no contradiction: the end was peace, though the means was effort, the one fading into the other: the spirit might find it hard at first to

use its new weapons, the soul might shrink before the responsibility of its new liberty, before the burden of the choice which its new enlightenment laid upon it: some pangs it must undergo: "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother": "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me". The soul's agonies, when it is compelled to recognise for the first time its own responsibility, are indeed hard to endure; when it has to choose between God and eternal truth on the one side, and on the other all that is most dear, most graceful, most touching in the affections or traditions or customs of its early surroundings: that agony surely those to whom Christ spoke had already undergone: they had left all and followed Him, for His love constrained them, and now in the solemn words of His Resurrection greeting, their doubts were solved, their difficulties were past, all smaller things that had perplexed them were gone: in the presence of their risen Lord they could only have peace. And so too is it through the whole course of the Apostolic history: we are told of the first congregation at Jerusalem that they "did eat their meat in gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people". And throughout all the Apostolic writings, there is no wish more common or more strongly dwelt on than that for the peace of the little Christian communities. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." "The Lord of peace Himself give you peace

always by all means." "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ."

And surely those for whom the Apostle utters such wishes had scanty means of finding this peace in their outward surroundings—few in numbers, members of a despised sect, practising their rites in secret, knowing not what might befall them : hindered on every side in the conduct of their daily life and in the arrangement of its small details by the fact of their Christian profession, plunged in contradictions, each of which required great delicacy and tact and courage to solve satisfactorily, it would have seemed that they at all events could have little peace ; that on them weighed with an especial heaviness the disturbances, the distractions, the hopeless miseries of daily life, when every little thing was liable to be misunderstood, where every step was watched by jealous and unfriendly eyes, when the Christian felt that he was entirely out of harmony with the world around him, and that rest and repose could never be expected to emerge from the contradictions and difficulties by which he was beset. And who was he who spoke to them of peace, with all the joy and confidence of one who already possessed it, who knew its deep satisfaction, who wished all others to enjoy it? He was a man of weak bodily frame who lived a life of continual hardship : a man who felt most keenly the weight of responsibility which he had voluntarily undertaken.

It is no peace that comes from without, that can be gained by worldly surroundings, of which St. Paul speaks: it is the "peace of God that passeth all understanding," the peace given not as the world gives: the peace for which he gives the reason when he says, "herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men".

Peace, then, and repose and rest even in this life are part of the Christian's heritage, they are what he may justly demand as his own, they are possessions which it is in his own power to realise, which he has only himself to blame if he does not possess indeed. How comes it that so few strive really to obtain them, so few put in a claim for such a glorious birthright?

It is the same cause that is a perpetual hindrance to man in everything he does: it is that he will not know himself, his own real sphere, his own real power. The peace of God, like the kingdom of God, cometh not by observation: men say in vain, "Lo, here is peace," or "Lo, there is peace"; they know not that the peace of God is within. It is not to be found in this or that enjoyment, not in the multitude of riches, not in the plenteousness of ease, not in the gratification of this or that taste, however noble, however intellectual, however refined; not even in the gratification of the whole life of the affections, not in the perpetual presence of the readiest sympathy, not in the most favourable opportunities for gratifying the soul's desires,—not in any or all of these does the peace of God lie

hid. Behold the peace of God is within you: only in the sanctuary made meet for His presence can God's watchful spirit brood, only the heart that is like that of the little child can enter into the kingdom of heaven, or can hope to enjoy here something of the peace, the blessedness, the repose, the fuller knowledge of which is reserved for the Divine presence.

"The peace of God" can only come to each of us so far as we try to live our lives according to our idea of God, according to our knowledge of His ways. It is of no good merely to have the name of God upon our lips. If God be to us nothing but a name, a symbol, a formula, hallowed by time, and venerable through the many purposes it has served, then truly we can find no contents in a religion which never touches our real selves, but is part of the conventionality which rules all the rest of our lives. Nor is God's peace likely to fall upon us if our God is merely the object of various logical propositions, all of them agreeing with one another, but all of them lying outside the concerns of our daily life, and never appealing to us in connexion with them; so that we are obliged to distort all things that interest us, and clip them down before they can be brought within the scope of our religion at all. This surely can give us no real peace, no true Christian liberty—our life sinks into a routine of little duties, small things become of extreme importance, we are terrified at the greater issues of life, because the result is so strange that we revolt from it when our religion

is seriously applied to them. But God's peace comes to those and those only who are content to allow that there is one God and beside Him there is none other, one God Who made the world and all that is therein, Who made all men, themselves amongst others, but in no other way than others, on no different conditions, and for no different destiny. It comes to those who are content to regard themselves not as the sole object of creation, but as part of the race of man, who are willing to admit as a practical fact regulating their every action, that they are not in themselves superior to every other created being, that they have no greater claims on Divine Providence than has he whom they would call the meanest creature, that they are not exceptionally favoured and protected from the evil consequences of follies or weaknesses or selfish indolence. It comes to those who are willing to grant that they are small and insignificant beings in the great scheme of the universe, who are contented to know their true position, their real worth, and who strive to bring themselves within the limits which their knowledge of God and experience of man show them to be most fitted for their scope.

My remarks may seem trivial, my advice too obvious to give—but, I would ask you, is it true within the experience of each of you that you yourselves, or the majority of those whom you know, really talk and act as though they recognised their real place in the world: as though they felt that God made them and

made all men and ruled the world by His laws? These statements would no doubt be readily accepted by every one as commanding assent at once: but it is one thing to assent to propositions and another thing to act up to principles: it is one thing to say in words that we individually live under the same laws and are subject to the same conditions as the whole race of man, it is another thing to behave ourselves justly, honestly to our neighbour, lovingly, contentedly, unselfishly to those around us—and yet all this follows most clearly from our first admission.

This, then, is the sense in which the peace of God may keep our hearts and minds, not by any satisfaction heaped on us from without, but by a real knowledge of our true selves slowly transforming us within. The more we think of God and know Him, know Him as near to every one of us, know Him as the constant revealer of our lives to us, know Him by all the works of His hands, and so learn His laws, and learn His intentions towards us, and learn what we really are, and constantly live our lives in the light of God's presence, and direct ourselves as in His sight, and try to guide ourselves to the fullest extent of what we know and believe; in proportion as we do this shall we find our lives become more orderly, our horizon grow brighter, our difficulties cease, and there will come into our hearts that peace which passeth all understanding, that peace which no man can take away. The process seems simple, yet the end is by

no means always attained. Are your lives peaceful, contented, quiet? Do you feel joy in your labour, however hard it may be? Do you feel that rightness of the heart with God which alone can turn the dark things of this world into its joys? The peace of God is not the same as happiness, still less as selfishness or self-gratification. St. Paul had little happiness which men could call such; but he felt that he had the highest of all happiness—the consciousness of a mighty task honestly fulfilled—"a conscience void of offence before God and before men". Is not this peace a rare thing amongst us at present? Are we not too often discontented, grumbling, gloomy, unrestful? Do we not have wild desires for what we cannot get? Do we not all imagine the possibility of some special good thing befalling us? Do we not quarrel with our surroundings, and make to ourselves grievances, and repine for what we cannot get? Surely the moan is only too well founded:—

> O purblind race of miserable men,
> How many among us at this very hour
> Do forge a life-long trouble to ourselves,
> By taking true for false, or false for true:
> Here thro' the feeble twilight of this world
> Groping how many, until we pass and reach
> That other where we see as we are seen.

To attempt to point out more than a few of the causes of this discontent would be tedious; but some few it may be useful to bring before you.

I. *Ignorance which is Ignorant of Itself.*—Many

persons with the best intentions and after the most assiduous trials are still discontented and unhappy, because they really have not yet learned anything of themselves, or of life as a whole. Their opinions are traditional, not gathered from experience, their beliefs are lip-deep, because they have been made for them and have never stood strain or trial ; and so questions are daily arising to which they give an answer and have a solution ready, but it is not a solution which really satisfies them ; their real self is at continual variance with their apparent self, and they are ill at ease. This is the discontent which youth ripening towards manhood has almost always to go through ; and hence follows the great practical danger in the moral education of the young of furnishing them with maxims which rest upon no principles, of loading them with traditions never explained. It is possible so to overload the youthful mind with precepts and beliefs, that it has no strength either to throw them off or assimilate them, and so life becomes a misery because while outwardly respectable, or even good, it is founded upon no genuine truth, which the soul has heartily embraced, and rejoices in recognising and obeying.

II. *Cowardice.*—Many are afraid to act up to what they know : they see that genuinely to act up to their highest duties, really to do all that might be done, would set them in opposition to prevailing prejudices or habits, would require a strength of character towards

which they feel indisposed to make the first efforts: these are they which put their hand to the plough and look back: these have for various reasons, some wearing a very specious aspect, deliberately built up their lives on a lower level than the highest which they know: we cannot wonder that to them the world looks gloomy, and the year has lost its spring.

III. *Arrogance.*—Many, very many, there are who will not recognise to its full extent the great truth that life consists in the perfecting of character by effort: they refuse to accept the perpetual teaching of life, they refuse to learn from its ever-changing experience: they do not recognise as a practical fact,—it matters little whether they do in words or not,—the many-sidedness of life and the perpetual variety of its teaching: they have made up their minds, it may be from very good motives, and from reasons many of which are excellent, on certain points of opinion or of conduct, and having made them up, they resent all things contrary to their conclusions. Hence an atmosphere of censoriousness stifles their happiness: they have so many people to dissent from, so many protests to make,—they are so often being offended, or hurt or annoyed, that they have no place for peace, or trust or faith: they lose all sympathy with their struggling brother, they do not see that perchance his partial truth differs only in form from theirs: they cease to learn life's lessons and so are out of accord with all around them.

IV. There is a morbid feeling, very frequently met with, which disguises from itself that it is selfishness, by trying to lay claim to extra sensitiveness and demanding special consideration from all who come in contact with it. This is one of the commonest forms of discontent and unhappiness: it is one of the most ordinary complaints of the moral invalid that he is misunderstood, that he is not appreciated as he ought to be, that he does not receive the affection he requires,—you know the long string of excuses that we all of us are tempted to give when we do not wish to be judged by the rules which we apply to all others. We must be content to be misunderstood in the sense that we all know our own virtues better than any one else, that we often speak unadvisedly and carelessly with our tongue, and have not the strength to take the consequences. It may be we are not appreciated, or loved as we would wish, or as we think we ought to be, but if we were to become of more value we should certainly be more appreciated, and if we were more amiable we should be more loved. In moral questions, as in political questions, the whole issue turns on whether we commence from our rights or our duties: to take up an easy attitude towards life and demand that every one should do their duty towards us, while we gracefully waive the question of how far we are doing our duty towards them, is one of the most ordinary forms of selfishness nourished by a distorted sense of justice. Let us begin from our-

selves in the first instance, and the result will be quite different: let us consider whether we do all we can for others, and let us not try to wring out of them the uttermost farthing, nay let us keep no creditor account at all against them. Every time we forgive our brother a trespass, our opinion of him increases; we are less hurt by his clumsiness or whatever it may be that excites our anger: life in general wears brighter colours for us: God's peace sinks more deeply into our hearts.

V. There is a morbid conscientiousness founded upon want of experience, which is most admirable in its source and only unfortunate in its results: such a feeling does not venture to grasp life as a whole; and so loses the sense of the relative importance of things: it expends ceaseless energy on the continual arrangement and rearrangement of details which would be better left to the domain of habit. Such a mind, by its absence of great principles, has no means of storing up the results of experience: it has nothing to which to refer them, and so it gradually degenerates into a morbid conscientiousness about trifles which prevents the development of a really healthful and therefore peaceful mind, and which either results in practical fretfulness and peevishness or in an over-scrupulous pietism, barren in results.

These are some of the many shapes in which obstacles are made by ourselves to the entrance and growth of God's peace within our hearts: each of you

may be able to add, from your own experience and observation, to the instances I have given. We all of us have need to ponder over these things, and to see that discontent is ignoble and unworthy, that it is a constant source of weakness to us in our daily usefulness, that it is a malady for which we have ourselves to blame, and one which, if we would but pluck up our strength and aim at acting worthily of our high calling, we could each do much to cure for himself: yes, to cure for himself, for it is useless to wait for others to take away our difficulties for us. Let us only face the world as it is and try to learn in it God's lesson to us, and look on all around us as the perpetual revelation of God's will towards us. So can we best set ourselves to do the duty that lies immediately before us, advancing each step with all the fulness of our nature, not being afraid of some sides of ourselves, but bringing the whole of ourselves unreservedly to all we do, acting in all things with boldness, but full of the true humility that wishes always to learn, and is ever ready to exchange what is less true for what is more true, so soon as it appears. So shall we indeed feel that we are working with God, and for God: we may go wrong in details, but our great principles will be true: our lives will then, even under any surroundings, be made beautiful; we shall feel we are not living in vain or labouring in vain, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

II.

THE CHRISTIAN IN SOCIETY.

PREACHED AT SYDENHAM ON THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1872.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.—1 *St. Peter* iii. 8.

THE Epistle for this morning's service contains some very plain, practical advice to us for our guidance and direction in our everyday life. It considers, more especially, the social life of the Christian, not his individual life: it speaks not of the intellectual doubts and difficulties he experiences from within, not of the searchings of his heart, or the misgivings of his conscience, not of the means whereby he is to work out his own problems, and attain through many mental struggles to the stature of the fulness of Christ: such questions as these are answered more especially by St. Paul, with the deepest insight into man's soul, and the keenest subtlety of intellectual analysis: but St. Peter in this Epistle turns rather to the solution of those general questions which all the Asiatic churches, to whom generally his Epistle is addressed, must have had continually before them: he turns to the discussion of the civil and social duties which the profession of

Christianity involved. I have chosen for my text the passage in which he sums up the duties of a Christian towards the circle immediately around him in his daily life. If we would understand it aright, it can only be by entering into the point of view of those to whom it was addressed. Simple as the words seem which St. Peter uses, they tend to be to us meaningless through the complications that have gathered round them.

We are continually apt to forget, in the use we make of the Epistles, the circumstances under which they were written: we perpetually distort the Apostles' language by not putting ourselves into the place of those to whom it was addressed. This Epistle was written to the Christian congregations scattered throughout Asia Minor, to congregations of all ranks of society, of all degrees of understanding: all of them by becoming Christians had separated themselves more or less from their former friends and associates, from their former ties, from their former affections, from their former pursuits. Conversion to the early Christians must have meant in every case an utter dislocation of their daily life, an utter upturning of all they had previously had to guide them, an utter destruction of those conventional rules of morality which must always weigh so greatly with every man, and which half-allure and half-compel most of us nowadays to respectability at least. All this the early Christian convert lost at once by his own voluntary

act. He was outside society, outside politics, outside most of the amusements and interests of those around him. Christ supplied more than all he laid aside. Had he lost friends? There was One above who had loved with a love that called forth his passionate adoration. Was he severed from his former pursuits? Christ had laid down His heavenly glory to live on earth for him? Were his former ties broken asunder? Through Christ he had been adopted into the family of God. Were his affections wounded in the severance? There rang in his ears the words of Christ: "Whoso loveth father or mother or wife more than Me is not worthy of Me". Truly if the sword had been sent upon the earth, the victim would kiss its blade and deck its hilt with garlands. To him Christ was all in all: he hung upon Christ's words, he lived in Christ's life. He heard ever in his ears

> A human voice
> Saying, "Oh heart I made, a heart beats here;
> For love I gave thee, with myself to love,
> And thou must love me who have died for thee".

This, then, we must always remember if we would understand the fundamental principle to which the Apostles appeal in their addresses to the Christian converts: this fervid, passionate, personal love of the believer towards Christ, as seeing in Him all that could call forth the deepest feelings of his soul, all that could attract him to the most adoring reverence. But it was hard to carry this love throughout all the

course of their daily life, to weave its lofty aspirations into the coarse web of daily duties ; they shrank from exposing their deepest feelings to the common gaze : in comparison with Christ the world looked cold and grey, their old occupations seemed strange to them and uninteresting : it was hard to bring their overwhelming feeling into accordance with their petty duties and ordinary tasks.

It was then to men so circumstanced that the Apostles wrote, and their moral precepts were in all cases built up round this central idea, were perpetually spoken with reference to it. To make the heart a temple fit for His indwelling, to illumine life with the light of His perpetual presence, to make every action be done for Him, every word spoken for Him, to show the believer how he might always have Christ with him, how he need never lose sight of Him, how he might transform his every action so as to do it for Christ, how he might fight as Christ's soldier against the world until he overcame it,—this was the object of the Apostle's precepts ; this is what Christian morality must always aim at doing. And it was most necessary for the Apostles so to do, for men found it hard to know how to use their fervent enthusiasm, what to make of their grand ideal. It is always so whatever our ideal may be. To make some great sacrifice is what the enthusiast longs for, to give up all his goods, to face martyrdom,—this is easy : to die for Christ—there is no difficulty about that :

but to live for Christ is quite otherwise. To have to feel day by day constant shortcomings, to feel the deepest love to Christ in the heart and find our actions belying it: to be betrayed into momentary slips and forgettings, to feel perpetual shame and remorse in His presence: to feel doubtful about little actions, to be uncertain and undecided where decision ought to have been easy: to find trifling misunderstandings follow acts meant to be of the most exalted and self-denying goodness: to find that in unguarded moments a word has passed the lips never to be recalled, an act has been done whose consequences can never be undone—all this is very hard to bear. We find it is true that the early Christians who lived beneath the shadow of the Apostles' presence, who saw the flashing eye of Paul light up his careworn face, and his feeble frame dilate as his words rang clear and vigorous and made plain what had been so hard before; or who heard the gentle and loving accents of Him who lay on Jesus' bosom, and who showed so clearly what Jesus' love could do; or again who heard the simple, manly, honest voice of Peter longing to make plain to others what he himself had learned through many trials—we find it is true that they who were so taught faced the difficulty like men, learned that the world need never overwhelm them however close it might surge around, and learned that to love Christ was to live as He did, was to take as a model for their own life the life of Him who went about doing

good. But in the ages that soon followed, when the Apostles' voice was still, and those who lived after their ensamples had gone to their rest, we soon come to the time when unmeasured enthusiasm prevailed, when the feelings were allowed to dominate the life of believers, when to nourish a passion in the heart was thought a higher course than to work it out humbly yet confidently in practice, when men shrunk from the conflict with the world, and sought in the seclusion of their cells to secure themselves from the contamination of its touch.

And so it came about that the monastic ideal was handed on to Christendom, and we are by no means rid of it yet. With its advantages and disadvantages I am not engaged to-day, but I merely wish to point out that it came late in the development of Christian morals, and that it is founded upon a widely different conception of the Christian life to that which the Apostles taught and carried out. They regarded the love of Christ not as opposed to earthly love, but rather as giving it a fuller meaning, as shedding upon what might be transitory the glory of what was eternal; to them the love of Christ did not overthrow the ties of natural affection, it hallowed and sanctified and made them more precious. To them the love of Christ did not mean self-seclusion, did not mean morbid self-consciousness, did not mean a bitter dissatisfaction with all around them, did not mean cold reserve, did not mean the mechanical performance of

stated duties,—but it meant broad sympathies that went out to meet the world, and pined only because they could not embrace enough; it meant a tender and compassionate care for all men; it meant a yearning love for others, so deeply seated, so fervent in its strength, that in its light self-sacrifice became self-development, the highest pleasure was the highest duty, the one irresistible law of their nature was to give expression in their least acts, in their least words, to this consuming love.

I need not trace this fact farther. I need not refer you to the account of the early Church in the second chapter of Acts. I need not tell you how the heathen marvelled at them, and said, "See how these Christians love one another," until Christian love, hand in hand with Christian courage, overcame the pagan world. I need not say how Christianity overcame the isolation in which men had lived up till Christ's coming, how it turned brotherhood into a passion, and gave to the love of mankind all the intensity of the deepest individual feeling. I need not point out to you how Christendom with all its shortcomings is still a worthy monument of Christian love, and how a genuine philanthropy has always actuated its greatest minds. But I wish more especially to point out to you how the Apostle, in the passage immediately before us, traces the application of the great leading principle which I have tried briefly to set before you, through its various stages both in the heart and in the life of man, till he

brings it within the reach of every one of his hearers. On the one hand was their love for Christ, on the other was the world with all its dangers and difficulties, and not only the world which was opposed to them, not merely their enemies who scoffed, but also the little Christian world in which they lived, which had its difficulties hard enough to bear, for it is much harder to differ a little than to differ much, to face the small troubles of life than to face its great ones. But it is to this simple daily life with its troubles and difficulties that the Apostle is here referring. At the beginning of the Epistle he sets eloquently before them the truth of their salvation in Christ, and of their heavenly calling, and then goes on to show at once the civil duties whose performance is demanded by the fact of this salvation: "Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles": be a light to the world around you: carry on your life so that its outward appearance to all men may be a testimony unto them for God. Then he goes on to recommend to them as citizens, submission to the recognised civil authorities, for Christianity must not be allied with lawlessness, but like the little leaven must be left to ferment in the hearts of men till the outward form of the world's organisation accord with the fulness of the Christian law. He then passes on to consider the life of the family and the duties of its various members one to another; setting forth how under the conditions of society then existing, servants should obey their

masters, wives be submissive even to their unbelieving husbands, and husbands honour even their unbelieving wives. And then, giving at last the general principle which has guided him in his precepts, he traces in the text the gradual development of Christian love, as it proceeds through all the different spheres of life.

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

Let us examine the various steps of this analysis, let us trace the process which the Apostle is here describing, and see if it may not apply to ourselves. First, "be ye all of the same mind". From the love of Christ follows first and most plainly Christian unanimity; unanimity in its strictest sense of agreement, or rather identity of convictions on fundamental points: about that there can be no doubt. Christ lived for all, and all to whom the Apostle was speaking loved Him, and were striving to follow Him. Let them never forget that fact: let it be always before their minds in all they did: whatever differences might arise amongst them, however wrong they might think one another's conduct, however they might be inclined to withstand one another if necessary to the face, however much one might think another had gone astray and acted wrongly, still no feelings of anger, no holy grief, no necessity for reproof should ever be allowed for a moment to get the better of, or obscure the conviction of the oneness of their mind in Christ. Their paths might be in different

directions, they might not be able to understand one another's course, the world's mists might so gather round them below that they were hid from one another's sight, and groped onward each for himself, but let them never forget that above the region of mists and clouds, the eye of each of them was fixed upon the same Sun of Righteousness, each of them was longing for those rays to dispel the fog and darkness, that so each might see and recognise his fellow, and each might clasp the other to his arms with tears of joy and love. Yes, this must be the beginning to each of us now too of the Christian life. We must be of the same mind, or rather we must see that we are of the same mind, that it is impossible that any, even the meanest, who calls upon Christ's name in any, even the most inarticulate, accents should not be one in heart and soul with us, should not be to us in very truth a brother. How can we be content to stagger on through life, thinking each of us that our eyes are fixed above, content to jostle against and stumble over one another without a thought of our common goal, without a care for mutual assistance? No, if we are Christ's at all, we must recognise our fellow-countrymen in Christ: recognise them as countrymen wherever we find them, and in however miserable a plight, recognise them freely and heartily and honestly, and by so doing we shall come at once to the next step of the Apostle's admonition, "have compassion one of another," feel with one another.

Is it not necessary that those engaged upon a common quest should feel the deepest interest in one another's success, should press round to hear the most trivial incident, which can be told by one who has adventured farther or by another way than the rest? Truly if we could but realise that we are a band of wanderers in a strange land—of all ranks in society, it may be, of all levels of intellectual powers, of all degrees of mental culture and physical strength—would we not as we wandered on, longing each of us for different things, the weary for rest, the strong for further progress, the wise for more knowledge, the luxurious for more ease, would we not still each of us feel the necessity of helping the other with all his might? Strong and weak, wise and ignorant, all would feel the absolute necessity of holding together, to separate would be destruction, to quarrel would be ruin; and so the wise man would with a smile of comfort explain to the simple that he need not be afraid of some phenomenon of nature which had struck his eyes unexpectedly for the first time. The strong man would carry the weak tenderly and gently in his arms and listen to his moans without irritation, and try to comfort him by kindly assurances that the rest of the journey would be easier, and the worst would soon be over. The man of culture or rank would not refuse to take his part cheerfully in the daily work, but would do it with all the greater glee because his interests lay elsewhere and it

could never become to him mechanical or absorbing. Sympathy would come to us quite naturally if we could keep our unity of object clearly before us: but this is so hard for us to do; life seems so differently allotted to each of us; we cannot realise that it is the same after all, that each of us can help or impede infinitely every human soul we come across in our daily walk. To feel with our brethren,—how great a thing it is; great both for them and us; great for them, for how the crushed and wounded soul revives before the look that tells it its woes are not unheeded; how the despairing spirit clings with an agonised grasp to the words that tell him he is not absolutely alone in the world, till hope comes back, and life becomes strong to it once more. How the timorous who crouches in hiding to escape the crash and whirl and tumult that life presents to him will treasure up a cheering speech, and begin to stand erect before the calm eye of which he becomes more in awe than of his own terrors: and how on the other hand will he who gives such sympathy gain in strength of character, gain in depth of feeling, gain in knowledge of the mysteries of life, learn most fully the nature of God by studying most closely man, His greatest work: learn knowledge of himself, learn experience of others, learn caution and wisdom to guide aright himself and others, learn to look through appearances to realities, learn the confidence that comes only of humility,

But it is not enough for this purpose to sympathise only with suffering, to spend one's time only in the hospitals of human souls; it is easier, far easier, to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that do rejoice. Misery appeals to one as to a superior, the relief of distress is a definite action, bringing with it its definite feeling of satisfaction, and it is possible to cultivate a feeling of sympathy with woe which may leave the heart cold, nay even harsh, to all who are not in need of our assistance for their distress. Our sympathy may be mixed with selfishness and may be one-sided; we are not to rest here, we are to "love our brethren" of every sort: our sympathy must lead to love towards all with whom we come in contact. Surely we must love genuinely those who are around us, whom we have known so long, surely we must love them both in good and ill, in evil report and good report. We must know how to meet their demands upon us, to overlook their faults, and overcome them by our love, to recognise how many of what the world calls faults are necessary to each one in the development of character: how restlessness is inseparable from high aspirations: how bitterness tends to go with intensity of character: how despondency is the reaction from excess of energy: how carelessness is often the result of an unsuspecting goodness of heart: how many faults in short are ill-regulated virtues: how different ages tend to bring different social virtues into prominence. This and

much more Christian love instinctively supplies. Each one makes allowances for the other without effort, without knowledge; each rejoices in beholding the other's progress, delights to see the mind unfolding, the affections developing, the feelings becoming strong and deep, each tries to remove every possible hindrance from the other's way, to secure him from every possible hurt, tending every plant with care, protecting them from the winter's frost, and shading them from the summer's excessive glare,—watering them when thirsty and drooping, clearing away weeds and blight, yet carefully and tenderly so as in no way to injure a leaf of the plant, that so each flower may expand in full perfection of bloom and beauty.

Such is the office of Christian love in each society and circle. But it can only work these results, if thorough, if built upon a loss of self in Christ. For if each stands and thinks what are his individual rights against every other man, if he calculates what is due to his dignity, and how many times more than seven it is right to forgive his brother his trespasses, assuredly his love cannot attain its perfection, cannot be such as to transform the world. And this self can be got rid of only by perpetual exercise of love to others. The more we labour for ourselves alone the more discontented we become. The more we do for the good of others the more clearly do we build up a new self, growing daily unto the fulness of

the stature of the perfect man in Christ. Contrast for a moment the notion of perfection held by those who would adapt all human character to the mechanical mould of the cloister, with that of Him who wandered over the hills of Galilee, and the publicans and sinners came unto Him. Did you ever think of the full meaning of that expression, "they *came unto* Him". It is not to every kind of what we call goodness that the sinner comes: he is drawn only by love; and by love only can we move the world and win it to what is noble, and good and true. Verily to him who loveth much shall much be forgiven.

But there are yet two admonitions of the Apostle which follow upon his other precepts. It might have seemed to us that he had done all that was necessary when he had bridged over thus far the believer's passage from the love of Christ within to the love of his brethren around him. But there is yet more that can be done. The love of those around him, the genuine love founded upon a resignation of self and self-gratification, must not only simplify the Christian's life, and increase his usefulness within his own immediate circle, but it must also leave its impress deep on his character, it must affect his entire being, it must give him a broad view of his general duties to all men, it must send him out into the world an ensample and a blessing to all men.

So far we have considered the development of Christian love within the individual, but besides this,

pitifulness and courtesy are to be the accompaniments of his daily life, and by means of them his Christian love is to shine forth to all who come in contact with him. Pitifulness is more subtle than sympathy; for sympathy is the capacity for entering into another's joys or sorrows, and feeling with them so as to halve the sorrow and double the joy; pitifulness is that deep-seated tenderness of heart and soul which draws to itself the weary and heavy-laden, which commands the confidence of the broken-hearted. Pitifulness is that quality which the Magdalen found in the Saviour's words, when she was inspired to draw near and wash His feet in her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head. Pitifulness is the overflow of love, drawing all who need consolation and comfort to its waters, that there they may slake their thirsty souls.

Finally, courtesy is the development of Christian love in the smallest detail of daily life and conduct; it is the perpetual recognition of our duties towards every one we meet; it is the perpetual sense of the dignity of humanity, of the honour due to all God's creatures, of the infinite grandeur of every human soul. It is the entire absence of self-assertion, the entire absence of a feeling of individual rights, of captiousness about little matters, of feeling hurt and brooding over trifles; it is what the Apostle meant by "in honour preferring one another". Courtesy is too often regarded as dealing with trifles only, as being an artistic finish to the character, as requiring leisure

for attention to the trivial details of life. Nothing could be more untrue. There is a spurious courtesy of grimace and gesture, as there is a counterfeit of every virtue; but the genuine courtesy and kindliness that springs from Christian love demands a forgetfulness of trifles, demands an eye fixed only upon the goal, and content, if only that may be reached, to make light of all the difficulties of the way. It requires no grand surroundings for its exercise. It may be exercised in any sphere of life, however humble: it may have been the lot of many of you, as it certainly has been mine, to meet with it in its most perfect form from the simplest peasant.

I have tried then briefly to draw out the Apostle's application of the Christian's love for his Saviour, to the practical needs and requirements of social life. It is good for us from time to time to trace back our ordinary duties to their source; by perpetual repetition they become conventional, and are done perfunctorily, through mere force of habit. It is good for us sometimes to refer directly to our ultimate standard, for it is only by reference to it that we can keep our moral maxims of daily use at their proper level. It would be difficult, I know, for most of us in every action of our lives to be actuated solely and instantly by the thought of our love for Christ; but we should be sure that we hold no moral maxims inconsistent with that love. We should beware that Christ's love in us be not enervated by love of the world. We should beware

lest the canker of conventionality eat our hearts out of us; lest our love, like that of many, wax cold. We should remember that we are told to shine as lights of the world, and that through us Christ's love ought to shine out upon all. Oh, if we could only realise this sufficiently, what might not the world become? How life would change for all of us: how we would be rid of many of our troubles and miseries: how we would be relieved from those pettinesses and trivialities of daily life which weigh down many of us and force us to turn our eyes to the mire: how we would be free from those bickerings and slight exasperations which do so much to degrade, to vulgarise, to disennoble the daily life of each one of us. Let us each think upon these things, and see if we cannot shed over our daily lives the beauty that comes only from Christ and His love; the grace, the unspeakable grace, that wells from every look of kindliness, from every word of compassion and tenderness. So may we work with God to bring about that peaceable ordering of the course of this world for which we pray: so may we help on that joyful service of Him by His Church in all godly quietness for which every heart longs.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

III.

PRAYER.

PREACHED 1872.

Pray without ceasing.—1 *Thess.* v. 17.

AT first we might be disposed to consider that these words of the Apostle are not to be taken literally, and are merely a strong expression used to impress upon us the necessity of frequent and persevering prayer. But if we look at the admonitions by which this text is surrounded, "Rejoice evermore," "Give thanks in all things," we see that this advice also, "Pray without ceasing," must be understood in the same sense, as denoting a frame of mind rather than a series of actions. Christian cheerfulness, Christian thankfulness, Christian prayerfulness are all regarded by the Apostle as states of mind which ought always to be characteristic of the believer, which ought to form as it were the background, the bright warm background on which the sombre shadows of hard daily life shall fall, and which will prevent them from being so dark as they would otherwise be. The three injunctions hang completely together as making the atmosphere of the Christian life. The Christian re-

joices evermore, for he feels that he is the child of his Father Which is in heaven, Who made the world and all that is therein, Who sent him into this world through His abundant love; and so he sees in all that befalls him his Father's hand, and strives so to use this world and its opportunities, that he may become like unto his heavenly Father. If this be the Christian's position, how can he fail to be cheerful, to be resigned, to be contented? Life becomes to him intolerable if its clouds hide from him the sight of his Father's face. Life is to him only possible through his trust in his Father's love, which alone explains to him life's difficulties. He is always cheerful, though never it may be in exuberant joy; as St. Paul says of himself, "he is sorrowful, yet always rejoicing". In his mind, which is with God, there is a perpetual joy, which not even the intrusions of the cares, the losses, the sorrows, the miseries of this world can ever entirely take away.

And so, too, if the Christian can rejoice evermore, he can pray without ceasing. If his soul can always feel contentment and trust in God, however horribly the waves of this world may rage and swell, so can it, so must it, be always sending forth its aspirations, its wishes, its desires, into God's presence. Christian resignation is not opposed to Christian freedom; man may act as he will, and resignation to God's disposals is not the same as fatalism; it is not mere apathy or carelessness, it does not excuse us from strenuous efforts on our own part. We trust in God because

we have done our best and utmost, and the issue lies beyond our power.

Thus, then, our ceaseless prayer follows on our continual cheerfulness. The Christian lives that he may become like God, that he may develop and perfect his character by continual effort, that he may rid himself day by day of some littleness of soul, of some taints of earth, of something that debases and keeps him down and clips his soul's wings in their endeavours to fly. How is he to do this unless he lives his whole life in God's sight, unless he brings all his actions before God, and offers them to Him, and tries to make them accord with God's laws and purposes; unless his whole soul is always open before God, and his whole life is a continued prayer rising up ceaselessly into the Divine presence? How can he do this? How will this show itself in ordinary life? In what way will prayer influence daily life? The Christian, the earnest striving Christian will not necessarily in his actions differ, to the eye of the mere outward observer, from the earnest moralist, who is endeavouring to do his duty honourably to his fellow-men. Morality does not differ from religion in the duties which it imposes on its followers, but it differs in the extent to which those duties are carried, and it differs in the motive which it assigns for them. "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," that is a moral precept: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven

is perfect," that is a religious precept. If we followed the first precept only, we should try to do good to our neighbour through calculation of the good which he would consequently be likely to do to us. If we followed the second precept only, we should do good to our neighbour because our whole nature was striving after God, our whole soul was craving to be like Him, and so benevolence had become to us an internal necessity, without thought of return, without thought of reward. The moral man and the religious man would probably act in the same way under many circumstances, but their motives would be quite different. The one would act from a feeling of duty towards his fellow-men, the other from a feeling of aspiration towards the Divine. I am far from saying that it is not often the case that the religious and moral motives coincide, still farther am I from saying that it is not most desirable that they should do so, but yet they are in their nature separable and distinct.

You may see then how the Christian's life becomes a perpetual prayer. Not only must his actions approve themselves to his fellow-men, not only must he be able to judge of their goodness by the results which he sees, but they must also be done from the motive of the love of God, and of the desire to be like Him, and actions of one class are more desirable than others in so far as they admit more of the free exercise of that motive. Hence it comes that he must always strive to act as in God's sight, must always labour to keep

his doings open before God, and to realise God's presence with him in them; hence, too, he must always be pouring out his heart to God, must always be trying his motives by the thought of God, must endeavour to keep down self and selfish motives, and to escape all the snares of the world by never losing hold on the Divine side of life, by never forgetting its aspect in the sight of the Most High.

And this continual aspiration of the soul to God is prayer in its highest sense. Prayer is but the pouring out to God of the thoughts of our hearts; we tend to lose sight of its real meaning in its broadest sense, by the many divisions we have made of it for convenience of practice and reference: public prayer, private prayer, prayer for ourselves, intercessory prayer for others. Prayer of every kind and sort has the same foundation, it is the cry of the creature sent forth into the presence of the Creator, the utterance of its aspirations by feeble mortality, the consciousness of its Divine origin, of its Divine nature, asserting itself through the hindrances and impediments by which the human soul is hampered. This is the origin of prayer, this is its largest meaning, from this its separate uses come. We have divided it into heads, and set aside hours and times for its various uses, till we have gradually come to believe that these are its only uses, this its only acceptable method; and when we wish to be more holy, we think we can only become so by taking more hours from our service of men to

devote to our service of God. We forget that the necessity of devoting certain times and using certain forms of prayer arises not from the nature of prayer itself, but from our own weakness, carelessness, feebleness, forgetfulness. Let us consider the origin of the various forms of prayer, and why they are necessary.

Unless we set apart each day certain times for private prayer, we should tend to neglect it altogether, we should be giving a terrible opportunity to the world to take advantage of a day of forgetfulness to encourage us to forget God altogether. If we said that this prayer without ceasing of which the Apostle is here speaking were the only kind we needed, that our aspirations always accompanied our actions, we should indeed be presumptuous, we should indeed be forgetting our real character; we should become day by day less definite in our efforts, because we should be omitting periodical self-judgment, and so through want of any regulation we should tend to relapse into carelessness or presumptuous fanaticism. Private prayer at definite periods reminds us of our aims, enables us to judge of our actions, brings back our life into God's presence from which it has too often strayed.

Similarly, too, with public prayer, it is a necessary corrective to private prayer, which, if that were all, would tend to spiritual selfishness, would isolate the individual believer from the great company of his fellow-Christians, would limit his conception of his

Christian duties by rendering him liable to think only of some and forget others, would, in fact, leave him one-sided in his religion, just as solitude makes a man one-sided in his social character. For the same reason, too, the use of a public form of prayer is useful in order that each Christian assembly throughout the land may express the same desires for the common good of all, and that the idea of a Christian country with common aims for mutual good, and with common aspirations towards our heavenly Father, may grow up. And not only so, but a form of prayer binds us with the ages long gone by, prevents our desires from becoming dwarfed to those merely of the age in which we live, and makes us feel the unity of our aims with those of the generations that have gone before us.

But all these forms of prayer, these habits of prayer, most necessary as they are and indispensable as we feel them to be, are still in themselves only means towards that great object of our desire, far enough distant, almost out of our reach, by which our whole lives should be dedicated to God's service, our whole characters brought into accordance with God's will, our whole selves made God-like. Forms of prayer, times of prayer are but steps towards that life of prayer which consists in a feeling of unity with Christ, of willing obedience to our Father which is in heaven. This is the ideal character that Christianity holds out to us—to become perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. This is the means by which we

may attain towards that end—unceasing prayerfulness, continual pouring forth of our aspirations into God's presence, continual effort to express in every little action all that is God-like in our human nature.

Our prayers in public or in private are but broken reflections of that continual aspiration, are but inarticulate fragments of the perpetual utterance of our heart to God.

This is the ideal which Christianity sets before us of our life on earth and its meaning to us and to our Maker—an ideal which we are indeed too far removed from ever realising: an ideal far off from all of us. And because we feel how far off it is, and because we know how weak we are, how far from being able to reach such heights of effort, therefore it is that we try to save something for God from the racket and turmoil of our daily life. It is because we feel how far God is absent from our thoughts in our ordinary actions, that we try to dedicate to Him certain times and seasons more especially, and treasure most jealously our days and hours of prayer, and guard them from intrusion or disturbance. And well indeed is it that we do so, and woe be to us if we do it not. But let us not forget the meaning of what we do, the reason why we do it. Though we have to confess that we attach great importance to some places and times of prayer, let us not forget that we do so partly in contrition that our prayers are not continual, that our life is not always before God. Though we have

to pour forth some of our desires before God, let us remember that we do so because all our desires do not rise of their own accord into His presence. Our solemn and public prayers, our special requests, are but fragments of the Christian's true aim—a life entirely lived in God's presence, entirely devoted to His service.

It is necessary to keep this high, this ideal aspect of prayer before us, if we would thoroughly understand its character and its use. We may sometimes fear to provoke a smile if we venture to express too lofty or too exalted views, but be assured there is always a retribution awaiting us if we let go the highest view we are capable of taking on any subject. If we forget this highest aim and object of prayer, this connexion of special prayer with general prayer, we are at once involved in difficulties which may escape our notice from time to time, but are suddenly made manifest and set before us when we are least able to face them. The difficulties respecting prayer which arise, and about which all of us have recently been compelled to reflect, have their origin in a partial view of its character, which we who cling to its value are too greatly responsible for allowing to exist. Let us notice a few points which may make the whole matter clearer.

1. Prayer, being the utterance of our aspirations towards God, has a position for itself totally outside and entirely independent of any probability of its being granted. That is a cold view of religion, in-

deed, and of its power of solacing the human heart which tells us we should only pray for things that are possible. Shall we not tell God all we desire? Shall we not pour forth all the wishes of our hearts to our Father which is in heaven? Assuredly if we have any desire which we would not, dare not, tell Him in all sincerity and faith, then that desire is either foolish or wicked and should be plucked from our heart. Truly the God to whom we pray is the God that made the world and governs it by His laws. Those laws we may learn, those laws we must obey, knowing that the laws of nature, which science from age to age makes known to us, are as much revelations of the Divine laws of the universe, as are any others which we have been more accustomed to call by that name. We do not now pray for miracles to happen amongst us, we do not pray for the suspension of the law of gravitation, because we are, all of us, thoroughly convinced that the action of gravitation is uniform, and that, for our own good, God has shown us that it is His law. But it is our absolute conviction of the undeviating uniformity of gravitation that causes us to class it amongst natural laws. We recognise, without murmuring, that gravitation is a principle for the maintenance of the universe which God has made. We have no wish to change it, and therefore do not pray that it may be changed. In consequence of our recognition of this fact, we are sometimes told by those who investigate the laws of nature,

that it is useless to pray for the sick, because their condition depends on natural laws which cannot be altered. Are all diseases the same? Does every sick man die within a certain time as surely as a stone thrown in the air falls down again within a certain time? If it were so, we would not pray for the sick, we would have no hope for them, and the absence of hope would stifle our desire for their recovery, and we should no more pray for them than we should pray that the sun might set. But so long as their recovery is doubtful, the length of their days uncertain, so long is their life an object of eager desires which must be poured forth on high. The sight of pain and suffering and the sense of bereavement that would otherwise overweigh the individual soul are merged in the thought of God and His goodness, of the universe and its greatness, in resignation and submission not to a blind fate, but to a rational law. Surely our teachers of science are guilty of a foolish pedantry when they wish to hinder us from praying for the sick, when they wish to make their gropings and guessings after general laws the most certain and unalterable things in life. Surely the remedy is in their own hands if our prayers annoy them. Let them establish quite surely the laws of disease and we shall cease to pray against what has become certain. Our prayers proceed from our desires, our desires from the uncertainty of the event; if the uncertainty were to disappear so would the desire; men who would not hesitate to say

in private talk, "I hope my friend may recover," need not hesitate to say, "O Lord, look down from Heaven, behold, visit, and relieve this Thy servant".

2. Not only are our prayers independent of the likelihood of obtaining their request, but also they are not in themselves concerned with the immediate answer vouchsafed to them. They are not the clamorous petitions of unfortunate suitors who will be satisfied with nothing except what they demand, but they are the trustful whispers of believing souls breathing softly their desires to an all-loving Father—breathing them not as though He knew them not, for "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things". He without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls, He who has numbered the very hairs of our head, needs not that we should inform Him of our wants. We utter to Him our wants that we may try them by the thought of Him, that we may testify our obedient submission to His will, that we may recognise as we submit them to Him that our desires may be misguided, may be foolish, may be, nay, must be, selfish, inconsiderate, formed for the present moment without thought, without knowledge of the future, formed for ourselves alone without regard to others, without capacity to grasp in its fulness that universe of which God is the Maker and Governor, and whose laws it befits us to discover and obey. We cast ourselves with all our wants before God, we fling ourselves upon the world's great altar-stair, and if we indeed trust in God

our prayer must be answered, for its non-fulfilment will prove to us the uselessness of our desire. Who has not felt, as he knelt in prayer, and his heart strove to frame and his lips to utter some petition, who has not felt at times the half-formed words die on his tongue, and the desire fade from his heart, for he knew and saw when he tried to bring his wishes before God how mean, how small, how paltry they were, how unworthy of God's care. He has found that he may fulfil that wish at least once, by seeing its littleness and so cutting it down at its root.

3. Objections are often especially made against intercessory prayer. I need not remind you of the frequency and earnestness with which St. Paul desires each little congregation to whom he writes to pray for him. And who indeed would not wish to feel that many of his brethren are praying for God's blessing on his life, are looking at themselves and him as bound to the same high calling, as struggling to raise up their lives to God? Sympathy, in the smallest matters, how precious it is. Do you desire sympathy in grief and woe, do you find that it makes daily life easier in trifles, do you desire it in the mechanical drudgery of your business, and will you think it useless for the whole great tenor of your life, for that which alone is real about you, which will remain for ever when all else has passed away? And if intercessory prayer blesses him who is the object, equally does it bless him who offers it. Selfish and mean and blind

indeed is he who, believing in God, feels no desire to commend his brethren to Him. How much of our life consists in our dealings with others, how entirely is our character the sum of our relations to those around us; how impossible it is to separate what is good for ourselves from what is good for those whom we know and love. Oh, let us pray for our brethren, and so be strengthened to see them with the eyes of God who made them.

> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round world is everyway
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

IV.

THE APPEAL OF JESUS.

PREACHED ON PALM SUNDAY.

Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple: and when He had looked round about all things, and when now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve.—*Mark* xi. 11.

BEFORE the humiliation and sufferings of Jesus, came the assertion of His human grandeur, came His recognition by the people as Israel's King. Not on the warlike steed of the conqueror but on the lowly ass, He went forth in triumph. The crowd flocked round Him, they scarcely knew why; but carried away by the majesty of His bearing, they paid Him the homage due unto their King, and when, as the procession moved on, the first glimpse of the holy city burst upon their view, an adoring hymn in celebration of the Messiah's claims burst from the lips of the multitude. The tears of Jesus did not check their enthusiasm. To Him the sight of Jerusalem brought only the thought of a dreary past of wasted opportunities, of a still sadder future of rebellion and woe. But the exulting crowd swept on, ignorant and unheeding; in gathering numbers they thronged round Jesus as He passed through the streets towards the

Temple ; there He dismounted, and entering its courts gazed round with sad and earnest look. The Lord had come to His Temple ; the King of Israel took possession of His own.

This assertion of Jesus' royalty was claimed by no wondrous work, nor was it enforced by words of terror on the awe-struck minds of men. Not after a mighty miracle, not after a thrilling discourse, not with the accompaniment of pageantry was this kingly procession begun. Simply, in His ordinary apparel, leaving the cottage where He had spent the night, Jesus mounted the lowly ass and went forth on His course. His kingship lay in the involuntary recognition which He received from the consciences of men. Dimly, for a brief space, the crowd round Him awoke to a consciousness of His spiritual greatness, saw the things of God as they really were. In a confused manner they hailed Jesus as their King, in spite of, nay, because of, the lowliness of His mien, in which they saw for a moment the truest majesty. Raised for the time above themselves, wrapt upward to a purer region of thought and feeling than their ordinary life allowed, they caught a passing glimpse of the grandeur of the humility of Jesus. They felt that there was something in the world nobler and loftier than they yet knew, that the Spirit was mightier than the letter, that the truth was vaster than their traditions.

Yet when such was the condition of men's feelings, Jesus made no use of it. He did not improve the

occasion. He did not utter an impassioned discourse to kindle or deepen the impressions in the minds of the excited throng. Then, as indeed always throughout His life, He did none of those things which the conventionally good man, even among ourselves, would either do, or be expected to do. He went into the Temple courts and looked round about all things, but did not even then think that the time was fitting for further assertion of His ownership. He did not then proceed to cleanse the pollutions which grieved His soul. He looked round about on all the abominations, all the defilements, all the substitutions of the letter for the spirit, of ceremonies for righteousness which He saw around, but He did not then raise His voice or His arm in protest. The cleansing of the Temple was too significant an act to be done amid the accompaniment of popular enthusiasm ; the pleading voice of Jesus was not to be aided by the clamour of the mob, nor was His arm to owe its power to anything but the consciousness of their own baseness which the sight of Jesus carried into the hearts of those who turned His Father's house of prayer into a den of thieves. All that Jesus did after His triumphal entry into the Temple was to cast a sad and searching glance on all that was unfit to meet the Master's eye. It was a glance full of penetrating insight, piercing more keenly than a two-edged sword, to One who had eyes to see the things that belonged to His peace ; but it fell unheeded alike by the triumphant crowd

and by the traffickers in the Temple. It was only understood after its meaning had been enforced by power.

This disregard of momentary enthusiasm, this sad look of Jesus round the Temple, show us the nature of the last appeal which He made to the people before His Passion. He strove once more to recall them to a sense of spiritual things, to awaken their dulled minds to a consciousness of their need of inward righteousness. To one who could have understood, that look round the Temple would have awakened an overwhelming feeling of the difference between the professions of the people and their practice. "Ye hail Me," it would have said, "Ye hail Me as your Lord and King; ye bring Me in triumph to My Father's house, and thus it is when I am come: is this a house meet for a King like Me?" One who had followed the glance of Jesus and hearkened to the hubbub of the money changers, and saw the bustling tumult of the business of a purely ceremonial worship would have understood the rebuke which that glance implied. When the scene that the Temple presented expressed the highest aspirations of Israel, how could the King, who came to them in lowliness and meekness, find there a place to reign? The glance of Jesus round the Temple when, a few days before His Passion, the people were hailing Him as their personal deliverer, was a silent appeal from the enthusiasm that was on their lips to the deadness that was within

their hearts. The highest religious consciousness of Israel was far too low to make it possible for their deliverer to be really accepted by them.

To-day, my friends, we turn our faces towards the the Cross of Christ; we prepare to set ourselves in the coming week to follow His steps during His last days on earth. We must do so with an endeavour to grave more deeply on our hearts the sense of our own sinfulness and frailty, to awaken within ourselves a new feeling of the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. How are we best to do so? In what spirit can our devotions of this week be made most profitable to us? Before we enter upon them let us try to own to ourselves what manner of spirit we are of. Let us feel that on us, too, as on the Jews of old, is fixed the sad, earnest, penetrating gaze of Jesus. He asks not for our professions. He calls not for our unreasoning enthusiasm. He values not unthinking paroxysms of devotion. He desires not the shouts raised to His honour, but the heart sincerely devoted to His service. He would have us know Him better, and love Him more, and find His yoke more easy for our necks, His burden lighter on our shoulders. He would have us retire into our inmost selves, and flee from the contagion of conventional profession that makes our lips prone to utter more than our hearts feel. He would have us come aside from the din and turmoil of the world, from the trivialities of our daily life, from the struggles

of sect and party, that in a quiet place we may reason with Him alone. He calls upon us to fix our eyes on the mystery of suffering, on the blessedness of self-sacrifice. He bids us see the real source of spiritual power when we consider how He was lifted up on the Cross that He might draw all men unto Him.

To all men comes each year with a new force the solemn lesson of Passion-tide. To all goes forth the call, "Be still, and know that I am God". We are all bidden to deepen our belief in Him who died for our salvation, and in quietness, with self-humiliation and deep seriousness of heart to feel anew the overpowering sense of God's love to us, and of our sinfulness which condemned the Lord of life to die. But if we would grow aright in spiritual growth, the lesson that we learn should be each year a deeper one, one that we feel is harder to comprehend, more difficult to stamp upon our inner life. Christ bids us never rest content with our understanding of His life and teaching. When He entered His city as its King, He did not address His willing subjects: He passed on into the Temple and looked round about on all things. So it is now. He does not strive, nor cry, nor lift up His voice in the streets. Behold, He stands at the door and knocks.

When we lay aside our conventional beliefs and simply consider Christ's life and teaching as it was, we cannot but be amazed at the apparent lowliness and simplicity of its immediate object. The Son of

God came on earth and lived and died in one small province of the great Empire of Rome. He went not to the great places of the earth; He did not speak to kings and princes; He took no steps to make His mission as widely known as He could. He only walked with simple folk among the hills of Galilee, and taught the publicans and sinners when they came unto Him. Yet the kingdom of heaven was to be the little leaven leavening the whole lump. The growth of knowledge in the things of God was to be slow and progressive, the spread of the Gospel was to be gradual. Jesus did not live on earth a missionary life; He did not strive to spread His influence and His teaching on every side. He did not aim at attaching to Himself all the followers that He could. Nay, He hid Himself from men's enthusiasm, and repressed all attachment that was purely personal. In His teaching it was not the more obvious forms of sin that He chiefly denounced, not those offences against which society is always ready to defend itself; but He spake against hardness of heart, and spiritual pride, and religious formalism. The publicans and sinners came unto Him, but the Scribes and Pharisees held aloof. Those who were dissatisfied with the barren religion of respectability could recognise the spiritual reality of the teaching of Jesus, and found in Him rest for their souls. The Scribes and Pharisees, who tried each utterance of His by the standard of their own narrow formulæ, were blind to the meaning

of His words. For this cause Jesus denounced them, that they should no longer blindly lead the blind, that they should not offer men stones for bread and teach their followers to say, "Peace, Peace," when there was no peace.

The teaching of Jesus aimed at raising higher the religious consciousness of the best men of the time. Starting from the highest religious conceptions that existed in the world, from the highest knowledge of God and of God's ways that men were yet capable of grasping, He opened up an infinite region of spiritual perception, gave a boundless scope to the aspirations of the soul. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The sphere of the believer was to be constantly extended, each new effort was to call forth greater strength, each truth grasped was to be the means of leading to the quest of more truth, the husks of the letter were to be constantly dropping away before the fuller growth of the Spirit.

This was the meaning of Christ's look round the Temple; it was a look of sadness, that the old bottles could not receive the new wine, that the conventional religion of Israel had in it so little to which the teaching of the Gospel could attach itself. Let us feel to-day that on us too the same glance falls. Before we prepare to follow again the steps of our Redeemer's Passion, let us feel that His

piercing gaze is fixed upon the temples of our hearts, upon our holy places as well as upon the faults we are ready to admit, the sins we are willing to bewail. The thoughts, the services of Holy Week appeal not to the careless and indifferent but to those especially who are striving to quicken their inner spiritual life. Let us see that we use them for this purpose, that we are ready to retire into ourselves, to disentangle our real self from the affectations, the conventions, the unrealities that tend to cluster round even our best and noblest endeavours. It is not enough that we keep before us always the same aim; we should feel that our aim rises with our practice, that, as we escape from the trammels of the lower self, a constantly expanding vision of future effort opens before our view.

The Christian life presents itself to each one in the twofold aspect of a mission and a probation. We may labour for the good of others, we may strive to discipline our own character; the two views are in no sense antagonistic, the further any one advances in the path of godliness, the more does he find that both these endeavours coincide. But each one tends to begin his Christian career with one or other of these views set prominently before him. The look of Jesus round about the Temple may serve to remind us, that it is well sometimes to survey carefully even the recesses of our spiritual life, and anxiously inquire whether in them there be ought that is contrary to the mind of Christ. He who approaches life in a missionary spirit, who

resolves to find his soul in labouring for the good of others, should in the ensuing week bethink himself of the searching look of Jesus that will one day try every man's work, whether it be of gold or silver or precious stones, or of wood or hay or stubble. Has his philanthropy tended to degenerate into an occupation in life? Has self reasserted its supremacy over the life that professed to be founded on self-sacrifice? Has no ambition mingled with his labours? Has his indignation always been reserved for wrong-doing, or has not a sense of personal defeat made him keen to renew a fray on trivial grounds? Has not the thirst for triumph swayed his judgment? Has he never fought his own battle and called it the battle of the Lord? Has he held firm only to the simple truth as he knew it and felt it in his heart, or has he been willing to cast it into such shapes and forms as provided him with the most convenient weapons for attack or defence? Has he held by the example of his Master who did not strive nor cry, but whose simple words were sharper than a two-edged sword? These and such like are the questions we have need to ask ourselves when we read, that Jesus went into the Temple and looked round about it.

Again, there are similar questions which may be asked in the case of those of us who have looked upon life as given us, in order that we may discipline our own character into that holiness without which no man may see the Lord. Has not self-discipline

been a cloak for indolence? Have duties towards others never been pushed out of sight by assumed duties towards ourselves? Have the fastings twice in the week, the tithing of mint and annice and cummin never overlaid the weightier matters of the law? Has the growth of a large sympathy with man as man kept pace with the increase of self-analysis? Has the perception of human weaknesses and human foibles never prevented us from looking upon those around us as brethren for whom Christ died? Has the conflict against self never provoked us to harshness against others, because they were not making the same efforts that we are so proud of making ourselves? Have we never said in our hearts with the Pharisees of old: "This people which knoweth not the law is accursed"? Have we never avenged ourselves in little matters upon others for the self-denials which we were imposing upon ourselves? Jesus went into the Temple and looked round about it. We must not shrink from feeling that His glance falls upon our noblest aspirations, our most favourite means of self-development, the means that we have carefully chosen as best suited to fit us to do His will.

All of us, my friends, be we what we may, would do well to humble ourselves before God in the week that is before us, and, retiring from the associations of our daily life, strive to obtain a deeper and a firmer grasp of the truth as it is in Jesus. Let us strip ourselves as far as we can, even of the prepossessions of our ordinary

forms of religious thought, and feel that the temples of our hearts are truly laid bare before the glance of Jesus. There is needed on our part the genuine sincerity of the Psalmist when he exclaimed, "Judge me, O Lord, according to my integrity; examine me and prove me, try out my reins and my heart, for Thy loving kindness is ever before mine eyes, and I will walk in Thy truth". We must feel that God does indeed judge us according to our integrity, our straightforwardness, our singleness of heart, our simplicity of aim and purpose. Only if we have this, can we stand before the searching glance of Jesus when it falls upon us. Our doings are worthless, yea even our best and noblest, if we look only at the end attained, the actual thing done; they become of value only so far as they show singleness of purpose following after the knowledge and love of God. The spirit that animates the doer gives value to the deed that is done; the cup of cold water given simply for the love of Christ is worth more than a display of incessant zeal which is alloyed by less worthy motives. Let us keep before our eyes the loving-kindness of God, and make the sense of all that He has done for us increase, instead of diminish, our feeling of His love towards all men.

Christ came to do away with the barriers between man and man. He taught His followers to look upon themselves as joined in a common bond of mutual love with all their fellows. Let us see that our religious aspirations broaden our sympathies, not only towards

those who agree with us, or who submit themselves to us for patronage or guidance, but also towards those who are our equals but whose circumstances or training have led them to other conclusions than our own. God is the judge of them and us. "Thy loving kindness is ever before mine eyes." "Teach me to restrain my heart from bitterness against any whom Thou art content to love." "I will walk in Thy truth." "Yea, teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I will keep it to the end." The secret of the Lord is with the humble and teachable who listen to the still, small voice of God. Not in any infallible system, not in any form that once apprehended will remain for ever unchanged, comes the truth of God to any Christian soul. Truths that once were on the lips have to be graven on the heart; sometimes suddenly by the hard blows of affliction and distress. But the humble soul learns by the constant revelation which God makes of Himself to those who call upon Him with a teachable spirit,—a revelation made in the small things of the particular hearth and home, in the ordinary matters of daily life. As the eye of the artist sees beauty in common things, so do the pure and lowly learn to hear God's voice in everything which befalls them.

Has our religion strayed from the integrity of simple faith? Has our love towards the brethren in any way waxed cold? Are we striving to shine with a clear and steady flame, though it be only a small one, as lights in that little world wherein each of us moves?

Remember that it is by the spirit, not by the letter, that Christianity will win its victories, and that the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Jesus by His example taught His followers that they were not to strive nor cry nor lift up their voice in the streets. His life and teaching was to owe its power to its simplicity and purity. He left His followers in every age to carry on His work, and their success must depend on their being guided by their Master's Spirit.

"Jesus entered into the Temple and looked round about upon all things." May we have the courage during the coming week of quietness and sober meditation to lay bare before His searching eye the inmost recesses, the most sacred places of our hearts. May we feel within us the yearning for a more spiritual life, a more spiritual faith than has yet been ours. May we gain a clearer discernment between the substance and the shadow, that so we may indeed keep the Feast of Easter not with the old leaven, but with the unleavened bread of greater sincerity and truth; that when on Easter Day we hear the call, "Lift up your hearts," we make answer with deeper fervour, with deeper meaning than before, "We lift them up unto the Lord".

V.

JESUS OUR JUDGE.

PREACHED ON ADVENT SUNDAY.

Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.—*Rom.* xiii. 11.

IN these words St. Paul recognises in himself a spiritual progress, and calls upon his fellow-Christians to examine their own consciences, and see if they do not feel the same. But the progress which he speaks of is not mainly the result of a process which he himself has worked out from within—it might be partly due to that, and doubtless it was so—but he looks upon his progress, in the first place, as being chiefly the result of a movement from without. He does not say, "Now I feel more certain of salvation," or, "Now I have gained for myself a clearer conception of what salvation means"; but he says, "Now is salvation nearer". The conception which he expresses is something of this kind. When he first believed on Jesus, there came to him a sudden illumination; he understood the meaning of life as he had never understood it before; he recognised the goal of life's pilgrimage and set his face steadily towards it. He had been active and energetic before, but he saw that his

energies had no definite and continuous purpose ; they were applied to things of small importance, they were on a low level. At the call of Jesus he saw new meaning in life, and his whole being rose into consistency. This was his first Christian experience, and in the strength of it he lived, and laboured, and found new happiness. Then there came a time when he raised his head still higher and looked forward. Behold the goal was nearer, he knew not how or why. It was enough for him that it was so. The fact alone was important ; it gave him new courage and new hope. It filled him with a thrill of joy, which rings through those penetrating and inspiring utterances which are embodied in to-day's Collect, and are the dominant notes in the message of Advent.

St. Paul's joy arose from that eternal source of all joy, the consciousness of progress. And his progress was briefly this : Jesus who had appeared to him on the road to Damascus as the reprover of wasted activity, and the summoner to a new career of fruitful service —the same Jesus now appeared to him as the great Judge of all men, the supreme disposer of the world. The meaning of life's probation had been to lead on to this new point of view, and make it replace the first. He did not perceive how the change was wrought within him. His words seem to indicate a sudden flash of self-consciousness and consequent exultation. He is speaking of homely virtues, of plain duties, of their highest principle, of love fulfilling the law. Then

he exclaims: "It all comes to this: Christ is nearer to us than when we believed. Our life, our duties, are best explained by feeling that our soul is being borne more towards Him; Christ, who inspired our soul's life, is waiting to receive it."

Now this is the message of Advent; the progress of the soul is from Jesus as our Saviour to Jesus as our Judge. We are willing to admit this as a statement. Do we see that it is a necessary process which runs through everything in life and involves no contradiction? Saviour and Judge are not opposed, they are the same thing. Life means growth; and growth must be into something larger; and Judge is only Saviour on a larger scale.

This is not a mere abstract principle of theology. It is true of all relationships in life. It is true of all human influence which makes for good. We are all largely influenced by others, and if we were to give an account of that influence, it would be something like this. First we felt the attraction of some one who became a friend because he seemed to call out new powers within us; our ideas easily took shape when we talked with him; there was no need of reserve, for we felt that he would not misunderstand us. This gave a sense of satisfaction, which in some degree was selfish; it began in self, in the sense of help and sustainment which we readily accepted. But as time went on, we were led to recognise that this support which we received, this influence which we felt, de-

pended on a character; and gradually behind the smile, behind the look which we knew so well, we saw the character of the man. Presently we were further shown that the character was founded on principles; and then behind the individual who had first seemed to have entered almost by accident into our life, stood abstract principles of truth.

Is not this what we learn from the memories of those who have passed away? Is not this their eternal value? The more we think of them, the dearer they are to us, the more distinctly do we recognise a unity of purpose in their life, and see with greater clearness the principles upon which that life was built. As we do so, we cannot but feel a sense of awe and dignity. That person did not belong to us alone; not to us only did his character speak; we dare not think of him as ours only, but as a force which worked in the world, and for the world, and expressed principles and truths which had a power of their own.

We know that all life comes from God, and we see in lives which we love the traces of the life of the Lord Jesus. But in our own life we can still further see the power of the life of Jesus working, in the manner which I have described. So St. Paul felt it. So St. John expressed the sense of its power. He who was called the disciple whom Jesus loved, he who leant upon Jesus' bosom, he it was who, when he saw Him in a vision in His glory, fell at His feet as one dead. Jesus had been his Teacher, his Friend, his

Saviour, his Guide in life; but the farther he advanced, the longer he lived, the more he felt the littleness of his individual life and the awfulness of God. St. John is a supreme instance of a process which is common in some degree to every Christian experience. We begin from ourselves in all things. This is inevitable. Self is the necessary starting-point of every endeavour. The soul accepts Christ first of all as supplying its wants, as the source of its sustainment. Through the power which Christ supplies, it grows into a perception of universal principles. We begin with our individual life, our individual needs, we grow into a sense of a common life which is part of a Divine order. Our personal needs are supplied, not so much because they are satisfied, as because we are raised above them. God teaches us by the experience of all that befalls us; and the whole tendency of that experience is to lead us into an ever-widening world. Our own troubles and difficulties are not so much removed or answered, as they are reduced to their due proportions. Life's meaning grows larger, God's purposes become clearer. New hopes are set before us, new truths to apprehend. In the sense of an onward movement we find new strength. We learn the deep significance of the words of Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life". We understand the order of His revelation. At first, while youthful resoluteness is strong within us, we need a way to pursue amid the manifold suggestiveness of opening

life. As we walk in that way which we followed at first for our individual guidance, reflection is awakened, and we feel the need of an explanation of the contradictions which meet us on every side. In answer to our inquiries, the Way becomes the Truth. Jesus is no longer merely the Saviour of our soul, the Guide whom we follow, who leads us in the paths of righteousness. He is the Truth, the Word of God, the manifestation of God's eternal purpose in the world, in Whom all knowledge is summed up. Then, as we understand the world's purpose, we feel that all things throb with Life, the Life which He revealed, the Life which He bestows, the Life which is Himself. Of this universal Life our own life forms a part, and must have its value according as it corresponds to the whole. And judgment is the manifestation of ourselves as part of a whole. Listen to the words of Jesus: "If any man hear My words and believe them not, I judge him not, the word which I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day". Then all else will have disappeared: all that comes from man's frailty, and folly, and perverseness: that will have passed away, and we shall see for ourselves what remains in us that is true and eternal. Again I say, the change from Jesus as our Saviour to Jesus as our Judge, is no violent change, but a gradual process of transition. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

In this reflection there is a mingled sense of joy

and awe which Advent especially calls upon us to develop. It is easy to feel joyous, it is easy to feel overwhelmed with awe; but it is more difficult to hold the two together, and see that they are inseparable. There is a tendency in religious thought at the present day, to dwell upon the love of God to the exclusion of the fear of God; to dwell upon God's love for us, without considering duly the needful return of our love to God. Yet in the old times the Psalmist saw that the two were inseparable. "There is mercy with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared." The fear of God does not depend upon a sense of His power, the awfulness of judgment does not spring from a sense of the strictness of His justice. It comes from the knowledge that we are the objects of His undeserved and ill-requited love. Love alone touches the springs of motive. The feeling that we are loved, that hopes are set upon us, is the secret of responsibility. "Shall I fail when so much has been done for me, when so much has been entrusted to me? Alas, when I look upon my failures, how shall I not dread to render my account?" Surely this is the spirit which animates all faithful service. Surely we cannot wish to substitute for it the spirit which says, "I did my best: make of it what you will".

But indeed we obscure God's judgment by applying to it any material conceptions. It is the end of a process, the goal towards which life naturally tends. "Heaven," said an old English divine, "is first a

temper, and then a place." This is a comment on the words of the Lord, "The kingdom of heaven is within you". Life's discipline is appointed to teach us this. At first the energy of youth longs to attain to definite ends, to work certain results. Life shows a man his limitations, and everything he succeeds in doing is done by an increase of humility. Success cannot be appraised; and the man without faith constantly fails because he works for his own purposes, and must either accomplish what he has determined, or he has done nothing. But the end of the Christian life is not success in this or that object of endeavour, it is the influence of a life which seeks its strength from God, and sheds around it the light of the Spirit by which itself is sustained. Things may go well or ill; particular plans may succeed or fail; but the life which feels itself growing closer to the Divine life need have no misgivings. Its progress is from Christ its Saviour to Christ its Judge, and it can only take to Him what it has received from Him. In the thought of Christ our Judge, we find the assurance of our victory through Him over the world. How pathetic are the records of great minds who wished for that peace which this world could not give them, but which they saw through many trials to be their lot. Who can listen unmoved to Dante's prospect of freedom from political troubles when he has passed "from Florence to a people just and sane"? Who is not strengthened by the dying words of Richard Hooker,

after a life spent in religious controversy which he did not seek: "There will be order there"? The experience of life is to the faithful soul a revelation of eternal principles, which can be seen at work in the world, but are there perpetually thwarted, twisted, entangled by man's perversity and sin. But they are there; and they become clearer to the eye of faith as years pass by, till they become the one great certainty, the supreme reality.

Christ leads us onward, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Without Him we look from a helpless beginning to a decrepit end. With Him life is a growth, a progress, bringing new revelations, opening up wider prospects, till we know that the little rill of our individual life, now lost in a quagmire, now dashed over a waterfall, now wandering lazily in an unsightly plain, is, nevertheless, making its way amidst all impurities, in spite of all obstacles, to the clearing and purifying ocean which sets towards the throne of God.

VI.

THE SENSE OF FREEDOM.

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, 5TH DECEMBER, 1875.

Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.—*Gal.* v. 13.

IT is a question more easily asked than answered—"What does religion do for the individual?" It is easy to say what it ought to do, but if we are requested to point out from the results of our observation of others, the special characteristics which are due to religion, we may be puzzled to answer definitely, and may prefer to take refuge in generalities.

Religion is approached by men from so many different sides, and is absorbed into their life to such different degrees, that it is hard to lay hold upon its common elements. Its profession is so far fashionable, that very few venture to repudiate it in some shape or other. Yet it raises so many unpleasant questions, that in common talk it is put to one side in favour of its more accommodating sister, theology. A man's religion is supposed to be shown by his

readiness to express his intellectual conviction of the truth of certain formulæ. He is praised or blamed for being "a good Churchman" or the reverse. His theological overpowers his religious character.

It is natural that this should be the case. Here, as in all other matters, the letter drives out the spirit, because it is easier to appreciate and to understand. Differences of circumstance and of experience are felt to obscure the understanding of individual character. But there is no difficulty in judging a man's words, in comparing his utterances with some recognised standard, and in classing him accordingly, as orthodox or the reverse. The letter is so easily seen, the spirit is so difficult to find, that we cannot wonder when, from motives of convenience, if from nothing else, the triumph of the letter remains supreme.

We are inquiring, observe, not what duties religion imposes on men, or what actions it makes them more likely to perform, but what large element of character it brings with it. We see many men,—almost the majority of religious people—who pay a respectful tribute to the religion which they profess, by reserving for its practice certain times and seasons, certain observances and rites. They eagerly profess themselves religious people, and are anxious to be reckoned as such. They will readily do anything which they are informed on good authority is desirable. They are really desirous to do their duty

when they can discover it, and are distressed when they think they have failed in it. The calm observer would look upon such people with respect, but would not find any definite contribution which religion had made to their character. It has acted as a useful regulator of their conduct, and a sound foundation for their conventional morality. About its usefulness to them there can be no doubt; but though it has regulated their conduct, it does not seem to have contributed any positive element to the formation of their character. It is not a part of themselves, but rather is something outside themselves, to which they appeal in an emergency, as the traditional sanction of the laws which govern their lives.

There is another class of religious people who find in religion an occupation, a line in life. They find a pleasing intellectual exercise in the discussion of small points connected with ecclesiastical or dogmatic systems. They find an occupation for their energies in struggling to advance the system which they hold, labouring for their party in religion in the same way as they would for their party in politics, no doubt convinced in both cases of the soundness and rightness of the opinions of their party as a whole, but forgetting the principles themselves in the excitement of the conflict. They take religion into their life by making it an occupation, a trade or a profession, something that is carried on by vigour and bustle and energy. Here again, it is hard to say what influence religion

has had upon the character. It has supplied a congenial field for the exercise of energy already existing; in some cases perhaps, it has stirred up an energy which might otherwise have lain dormant.

But here also religion lies outside the man. He is concerned with its mechanism not with its Spirit,—at least what he shows to others is his care for the mechanism, not his manifestation of the Spirit.

I am speaking, observe, only of the influence of religion as shown in characteristics that can be recognised by society at large. I am not speaking of its influence as repressing evil within the individual breast. Each man knows his own struggles against self, and each man can gauge how much religion helps him to carry on his warfare. In this silent way the presence of religion, in however small a degree, as an element in the individual's life, is a powerful element to improve society, to keep down the evil of man's nature, to discipline men into common obedience.

But this negative influence is hard to test, and there are some who assert that the gradual development of the conscience of mankind would have proceeded as well without the aid of existing religious systems. There still remains the question,—what are the marks of religion upon the individual character, by which it can be clearly recognised?

Here, as always, the inquirer must look deeper than the surface. The two forms of religion which at first attract his attention, are the religion of conventional

respectability, and the religion of ecclesiastical fussiness which we have been describing. But apart from these, often also side by side with these, the spirit of religion may be seen. It may be seen best in the quiet life of the God-fearing man who works in the world even as other men do, but in a different and higher spirit. He lives in a quiet way, according to the pattern of his great Master, Christ, "Who did not strive nor cry, neither was His voice heard in the streets," Who only lived a lowly life of love and gentleness, wandering over the hills of Galilee and teaching the publicans and the sinners when they came unto Him; yet the world grew greater for His presence, and its meaning to man was changed for ever.

So, now too, the most eminent fruits of religion are to be seen in quiet lowly lives that meet us in unexpected places, and draw from us reverence wherever we see them. Their leading features are a freedom from low and selfish motives; an air of nobility in what they say, however humble their position may be; perfect sincerity which has no concealment, because it has nothing to conceal; boldness and calmness of judgment; charity which is uninfluenced by passion; a wideness and breadth of mind in their motives, which is at first hard to account for. Around them is spread a purer atmosphere, and we feel its bracing influence while we are in their presence. As we hear them talk, we feel with shame and confusion the paltriness of many of our own motives, the ignoble nature of

many of our aims. We feel that while much of our own life is built on the shallow maxims of experience or worldly wisdom, they have a firm foundation on eternal principles. We are humbled by the feeling of our own littleness, yet attracted by the beauty of the result they have produced, and we are stimulated to attempt to attain it.

What is the secret of the charm of such a character upon us? What is the great element of strength which religion has given it? It is freedom—freedom from the trammels of the lower self, of debasing passions or equally debasing ambitions—freedom from the conventions of the world around, from the spell of the empty babble that floats round each of us—freedom from the power of unrealities—freedom in the true sense in which man becomes master of himself. Religion gives at once to him who really accepts it the power of self-realisation, the sense of individual responsibility, the consciousness of the momentous importance of life, the feeling of the simplicity of life's real problem beneath the manifold complexity of its outward appearance. The establishment of a direct and constant relationship between his own soul and God is the object of the endeavour of the religious mind. In the realisation of that relationship, the highest freedom of the individual consists. Only when man "has obtained a foothold outside this world" is he really free. Only then, can he feel himself above his surroundings.

Only then, can he go boldly on his course, without the need of a timorous glance around him at every step to see if others are walking in the same way. Only then, has he succeeded in gaining an anchorage amid the ceaseless flow of things done and things said on every side. Only then, can he lay for himself the foundations of a character, round which soon clusters much that would otherwise float helplessly at the mercy of the tide.

Religion's great gift to the individual is this sense of freedom, which is the first requisite for the formation of a character, the atmosphere in which the individual's strength is developed. This is true of all religions in some degree. But of none is it so true as of the religion of Christ, for it brings man, the individual man, into the closest and most intimate connexion with God. Its power and meaning in this way was at once felt. "Stand fast," says St. Paul, "in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."

Well did St. Paul know and feel the value of this liberty, founded upon an entire absorption of religion into his heart and life. Slowly had he been led up to it and realised it. He had passed through the lower phases of religious life into the higher. From his youth up, he had been trained in the religion of respectability. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews, and according to the straitest sect of his religion had lived a Pharisee. His studies at the feet of Gamaliel had

strengthened him in all the lore by which the traditional belief was to be maintained and supported. He had pressed on to do his duty to the utmost. He had set himself to preserve intact the system in which he had been brought up. He interested himself in maintaining the faith which he believed had been once for all delivered to the fathers, and which had been by their wisdom thought out and developed through the varying experience and teaching of the ages. From the religion of respectability, he passed to the religion of fanaticism. "Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless: concerning zeal persecuting the Church."

But he was not to stay here. He was to advance to the religion of freedom. Not in careful conformity to an outward law, nor in diligent exertions in behalf of an ecclesiastical system, but in the inward sense of God's presence with him, was his life to be spent. Freed thereby from outward things, delivered from the bonds of the flesh, from the maxims of worldly wisdom, from the hard husks of traditional observance, he saw the meaning of life, and no longer trembled before its perplexities or difficulties. He discerned between the realities of life and its phantoms. He saw the real objects of pursuit, and felt himself strengthened to pursue them. He saw the uselessness, the emptiness of much that he had pursued before. "What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ, yea doubtless, and I count all things

but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Yet there was in him no undue elation, no lawlessness at this realisation of his own freedom. He felt that he was free, that the old things had passed away, and everything had become new; but how great was the need to use his freedom aright, that he might build up on this open ground another and a nobler self. He saw the poverty, the weakness, the meanness of his old self which had been cramped by conventions, and disturbed by fanaticism. There was need of diligence, of care, of tenderness, of thoughtfulness in the work that lay before him. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if so be that I may lay hold of that to give me which, Christ Jesus laid hold of me. Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold of it; but this one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and stretching forward to what is before, I press towards the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ."

The sense of freedom brought to him no recklessness, no false security; nay, rather it laid upon him a deeper feeling of responsibility. The aim of life became indefinitely extended. It was a struggle onward towards perfection, an end that never could be reached; but every step in the struggle towards it opened out a grander prospect, and, while it showed the end farther off than before, enhanced the value of what had been

already obtained, and increased the eagerness to press further on.

Such was St. Paul's feeling of the meaning of his religion to his individual character, of the contribution which it had actually made to his own individual life. We feel, as we read and weigh his words, how like is what he realised in life to the aspirations of the noblest minds of all times. We find about his actual experience of life, every note of what philosophers of every age have set forth as being the utmost that the individual could attain to. There was complete *αὐτάρκεια*, for St. Paul was self-summed and self-contained, and was raised above all outward things, so that he could stand undismayed in the presence of the haughty king, and could say, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me to-day were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds". There was *ἀταραξία*, for to him to live was Christ, and to die was gain; the terrors of life or death were equal, the vicissitudes of outward fortune were unimportant. There was endless scope for holy meditation, and its field was increased day by day as the soul "strengthened with God's might in the inner man," and the heart more "rooted and grounded in love," grew better able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. So, increasing in scope and ever aspiring further, did this inward contemplation press on to its great end, "to be filled with all the

fulness of God". So too, in action, St. Paul lived so as to be a law unto himself: "Therein do I exercise myself day and night to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man"; "By the grace of God I am what I am".

Thus we see that the highest religion of the heart, when assimilated and allowed to work its full results on the individual character, produces the same results as are offered or aimed at by education and culture. Religion and culture alike place the individual in an atmosphere of freedom. Both liberate him from the fetters of his outward surroundings; both purify his eyes that they may discern the false from the true, the real from the seeming; both alike offer to man a secure field for self-realisation, and urge him to use it wisely and well.

But, though the result produced by culture and by religion on the individual character may be the same, the method and the motive differ widely in the two cases, and the aid given by the two sets of principles towards the realisation of the object proposed is still more different.

Culture aims at developing the natural man into strength and subtlety, till he is able to rise above his surroundings. The weight of brute force is to be overcome by acuteness. Adroitly and cautiously does the well-equipped adventurer steal through the gloom of his prison house to escape to the light of freedom. The giant forms of ignorance must be robbed of their

terror by the spell word of knowledge if he chance to know it, if not, they must be dexterously eluded. Caution is needed so as not to stumble, in the uncertain light, over the prostrate form of some slumbering fellow-prisoner, lest his exclamations of surprise should raise a cry and call out pursuit. Slowly and carefully, by his own wit and readiness, his own keen weapons, his own nimbleness and care, does the man of culture reach the domain of freedom. The power of analysis and criticism, the knowledge of the development of man's social and political life, have gradually supplied him with weapons strong enough to free him from the power of outward impressions and outward circumstances.

Far otherwise is freedom gained by religion. There it is not a slow training and discipline of the natural man, but a transformation of the natural man into something better. It is not a process of gradual sharpening of the wits till man is able to cope with the outward world; but the world is at once stripped of its terrors, and made subordinate to man's power. He who knows certainly that he is the child of God, at once attains to first principles, which make him strong, and the world easy to explain. His life is lived in God's presence, and he sees that it has been given him that he may employ it in God's service. The terrors of the world without cannot appal him, for he feels that they exist in order that by facing them he may be perfected. Day by day the meaning of the world

becomes plainer to him, and perplexities disappear. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." The realisation of a "Father which is in heaven," the knowledge of the world as God's world, the sense of God's presence in the little matters of daily life, the feeling that life itself is but a career wherein a character may be formed such as God can love: these are the beliefs that make a man strong and vigorous, like the youthful David who withstood the giant champion of the Philistines, when all the bravest warriors of Israel's host fled before him,—withstood him because "he defied the armies of the living God". God was to David "a living God," and in that belief he had self-mastery, nobility, heroism, because he had the sense of freedom.

I have spoken of the nature of Christian liberty, and have striven to make its nature clear by comparison with the other possible method of creating the sense of individual freedom. We see from the comparison, that what religion offers immediately to all, culture offers after much training to the few. There is a further question as to the dangers to which this freedom is exposed. "Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh."

The danger is twofold, moral and intellectual. There is the moral danger that a man should assume that his emancipation is completed too soon, and that carelessness should then allure him to license. This danger is especially felt when, in times of great awakening, an attempt is made to construct society on this basis of freedom.

Religious enthusiasm has degenerated into antinomianism, because men's excited feelings have hastened to anticipate the results of self-discipline; the new wine has been poured into old bottles. Rejoicing in their freedom, men have prided themselves upon it, and it has become "an occasion to the flesh". So is it also with the freedom that comes from culture. It has too often led to an indolent assertion of individual superiority, and then has degenerated into a means of unbridled self-gratification. It is not the misdeeds of vulgar ruffians, but the deliberate crimes of cultivated men, which raise our deepest feelings of horror. The man emancipated by culture is indeed dangerous to all, if he has not a worthy object to occupy his free energies. If, when he has escaped all other bonds, he fall under the dominion of self, the ravages which he may commit are terrible. Dangerous, indeed, is the man who is freed from all other ties, and is not a law unto himself.

There is also an intellectual danger. The emancipation that comes by culture tends to sophistry.

In the crucible of criticism all opinions are equally dissolved; principles disappear, and a number of points of view are all that remain. The character that should have been strong through its emancipation has only become flippant. The principles which direct the conduct of others are sneered at, and we fail to see anything which has taken their place. The most brilliant gifts cannot compensate for the want of a foundation, and there can be no results to a life which is built upon the shifting sand.

So too with religious freedom. There is the danger that a man think too much of his own position and despise others. Freedom must above all other things be accompanied by humility, by a constant teachableness of mind. It must be a means of increasing, not of destroying, the power of sympathy in others. There is a danger of isolation from the mass of men, of the formation of little coteries or sects of those who agree in opinion, of condescending patronage in endeavours for the good of others. There is too often a desire to perpetuate the especial method by which emancipation was first obtained. The absence of rites or forms is elevated into a rigid doctrine, which becomes a chain almost as heavy as the belief in the necessity of their presence. The man who has gained by means of religion a knowledge of himself, is open to the temptation of assuming that no one who has not gone through the same process as himself, can possibly attain to the same results. Accidental facts of individual character

or individual experience are elevated into universal laws. How many religious sects still survive which have lost all real force, and no longer appeal to the minds of men, but linger on as empty shadows drearily commemorating the personal experience of their founder. The living fire which gave force to the quaint machinery which he constructed has long since died out. Yet the dead mechanism still survives, and he who had burned with a desire to get beyond the outside of things, who felt that existing forms of dogma, of ceremony, overlaid the vital truths which he profoundly felt, has only succeeded, after a life of passionate earnestness, in adding another specimen to the collection of ecclesiastical curiosities.

The intellectual danger attending on emancipation, whether it come through culture or through religion, is the same in kind. It is the danger of isolation, of intolerance, of impatience. The individual is prompted to make a protest against the entire arrangement of society which he sees around him. The man of culture sees the hopelessness of others attaining to the same point of view as himself. His absence of moral energy leads him to cynicism. In self-satisfied or luxurious isolation, he contents himself with a respectful protest against the folly of others. The man suddenly awakened to religion feels it his duty to make a fierce protest against all who do not agree with him. He is freed by his religion only for a moment, that he may fall under the trammels of a

system of his own creation, which he straightway hardens into a rigid external law. He becomes a bigot, and labours not for the life-giving spirit of the truth which he believes, but for its letter which killeth. Noble energies are frittered away in petty matters; a noble heart is ensnared in the meshes of paltry intrigues.

These are some of the dangers of spiritual freedom: dangers difficult to beware of, for they come upon us slowly, and we do not know them till we have fallen under their bondage. It is useful to put them before ourselves, for they may serve to explain in some degree the failures of noble minds and of high principles. To gain heights of moral elevation is easier than to maintain them; to see and grasp high principles is easier than to carry them out in daily life. A noble character, if it lose its simplicity and lower its aim ever so little, fails in its effects on others, fails to kindle in them the spark of sympathy, fails to lift them beyond themselves. It is hard to reach the supreme success that alone is great and fruitful. Unless we remember that, the world seems dark, and man's power dwarfed. How many good intentions have produced but little; how much labour and energy has been spent without leaving any great result behind. Yes, for incompleteness mars the noblest work, and spoils its permanence. Not only must the work be well done, but it must be worth the doing. In striving for the spiritual advance of man no toil can be entirely thrown away, but to

work at fragments of a great design is worthier than to erect a paltry building, which will be useless to those who come after us.

"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." It is the object of the existence of this University to bring into close union the mental freedom that is gained by culture, with the spiritual freedom that is given by religion. The two sets of influences ought here to be combined, and to work in unison to aid in the equipment of the soul for its career of freedom. That freedom is fraught with dangers, but these dangers may be lessened, nay, almost entirely avoided, if religion and culture go hand in hand. The sense of power, which comes from self-development, can only be fruitful for good if it be checked by the profound sense of responsibility, which the perpetual consciousness of life as lived in God's sight alone can give. The sense of individual responsibility, which comes from efforts to lift up the heart to God, must in its turn be broadened, and made noble in its practical manifestations, by the knowledge of man's soul, which culture here can give. It is not enough to feel God's presence; we must know man also if we would work for man. Zeal must be tempered with discretion; knowledge of the secrets of man's inner life must guide and inform the sympathies. The lesson must be learned that systems were made for man, not man for systems. Here ought the opening mind, looking forward anxiously to life's future, to

learn the beauty of a noble and simple life, such as was the life of God's Son upon this earth. He mixed Himself in no parties of religion or politics. He laboured not to form a sect, or to set forth a system of practice or belief, which should satisfy the logical requirements of subtle minds. There fell from His lips, as occasion drew them forth, fragments of a wisdom which men feel to be Divine. There was shed from His life, as He moved in lowliness, gleams of a glory which this world could not give. By the loftiness of a soul that was free from this world and the things of this world, He still draws the hearts of all men unto Him.

As we gaze on Him we must feel the littleness of our best intentions, and of our highest efforts. He came forward as the champion of no system. He advocated no plans of social reform. He did none of those things on which we pride ourselves as our noblest and best undertakings. He only lived amongst men and loved them; and the effects of that life and of that love will last for ever. He bids us be followers of Him. He bids us do in our generation the work which He did in His life on earth. If we would obey Him, we must not shrink from making ourselves ready. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

VII.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1876.

Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.—*Heb.* x. 25.

THE duty of public worship may be enforced on the authoritative ground that it is a Divinely appointed means of grace which a man neglects at his own peril. The promise of Christ, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them, must still weigh with all serious men. Besides the greater sustenance given to man in the Sacraments, there are also the ordinary means of communion with God, first, in private devotions, and then in public worship.

But besides this argument, drawn from ecclesiastical discipline, it is well to consider the reasonableness of the thing in itself. It is noticeable that the Apostles never argue from authority as to the duties of the Christian life, but appeal to the convictions of those whom they address. It were well if their example were more often followed, and if Christian duties were more often traced to their root in the inner life of men,

rather than referred to the authority of an ecclesiastical system. Observances and duties ought sometimes to be looked at with reference to the conditions of the time, and to the state of feeling and opinion among different classes of society.

The duty of public worship has worn different aspects at different times in the history of the Church. In the Apostolic times, it was the necessary bond which united the little bodies of Christian converts, which strengthened the weak by the example of the strong, bound all together in Christian fellowship, and brought all to a clearer realisation of their duties to God and man. But besides this, it was also a formal profession of Christian faith, it was the means by which the Christians could testify to the unbelievers the reality of their own conviction. The great objects of public worship were, first, the realisation of Christian brotherhood, and next, the testimony of the truth to those who were not Christians.

But when the Christian religion had won its way to universal acceptance, it could not but be that those primitive ideas changed. The force that had been strong, when it was confined within narrow limits, moved languidly when it was spread over a broad plain. The need of testifying to the heathen, by a severe and simple worship, was no longer before men's eyes. In its place had come the more difficult task of endeavouring to make all Christian men realise to the full the meaning of their Christian profession.

The excited feelings and burning zeal of ardent souls sought for a more decided testimony to mankind than the ordinary rites of Christian worship could afford. They withdrew from a polluted world into the silence of solitary places, and there gave up their lives to prayer that God might forgive the wickedness of the world. Their example won the respect of all. Their testimony was so far useful that it produced a deep impression on men's minds. In the general misery of the times of the barbarian invasions, God was thought to be taking vengeance on the sins of mankind. Their faithlessness was meeting with its due reward. Only the prayers of the few men who still remained faithful, averted from the mass of professing Christians entire destruction. The ceaseless prayers of the few were accepted as, in some degree, a satisfaction for the carelessness of the many. The conception gradually grew up of worship as a service due to God, and which ought to be regularly rendered.

This idea is at the root of the worship of the Mediæval Church. A materialised conception of man's duties towards God rapidly gained ground. The formal organisation of society in feudal times tended to assimilate the public service of God to the homage paid by the vassal to his superior lord. It was something which had to be regularly paid by every one who wished to maintain a secure position. Hence churches increased and multiplied. Monasteries were founded by the penitent on his deathbed,

that the service which he had neglected to render during his lifetime might be rendered manifold by a perpetual body of holy men after his death. The duty of habitual daily attendance at public worship was recognised by all. The Mediæval Church obtained a ready acknowledgment of the claim, that all professing Christians should render to God the service which was His rightful due.

The reaction against the materialism of the Mediæval Church again altered men's views of public worship. It was no longer regarded as a service due to God, but as a means for the edification of the individual. The object of Divine service was to advance the spiritual life of men, to put at the disposal of all the zeal of a few, to enforce upon all their duties, and make them better fitted to perform them. Outward pomp faded away before severe simplicity. The glory of God was to be indirectly procured by the edification of man, not by any direct efforts to offer Him human homage.

At the present day, opinion amongst us tends to combine, in some degree, the mediæval notion and the one that grew up in opposition to it. The tendency towards a revival of mediæval practice has been modified and broadened by the antagonism to which it has been exposed. Those who most insist on the necessity of public worship as a service due to God, would also directly connect it with the edification of the individual. Besides regarding it as a service which,

if faithfully rendered, must bring a reward with it, they are also ready to adapt it to the needs of the individual worshipper, and to make, within certain limits, individual edification its chief aim. Similarly, those whose aim is primarily edification, are driven in spite of themselves to recognise, to some extent, in public worship the direct service of God, and to try and combine the two objects.

But it cannot be denied, in spite of this, that we see at the present day a tendency to disregard public worship altogether. I am not speaking of the careless or the indolent, but of those who are entirely in earnest about life and its duties. Many such abstain from public worship. Many more, who do not entirely abstain, are saddened by the thought that public worship is to them a duty and not a pleasure; they go to it languidly and come away discontented. It is not a sufficient answer to such persons to tell them, that public worship is a means of grace which a man disregards at his own peril. They have minds which demand a reason, and it is right that a reason should be given them. It is right that all men should have set before them the reasonableness of the course of conduct which they are called upon to adopt.

Those who abstain from public worship, or who attend it languidly, would probably put their reasons in some such shape as this. "If public worship is a service to God, it can be rendered more effectually than in Church. 'Laborare est orare;' to do good

to one's fellow-men is the most pleasing tribute of our praise to God. If public worship be for the purposes of edification, we can get greater edification from quiet reading or meditation or prayer at home than we get in Church." If pressed further they would say that religion is a matter of the individual conscience, that their own beliefs did not find a natural expression in the language of the public prayers; that the moods of men's minds are variable and are not always attuned to the uniform pitch of devotion which public worship presupposes; that often a sense of incongruity is caused in their minds by some utterance that jars against their own inner convictions. The formality, regularity and conventionality which are necessary for public worship, seem to them to take away from it all the spontaneity and freshness, which ought to be the accompaniments of the uplifting of the mind to God. Religion, they urge, is too sacred a thing to be exposed to influences which may chill its sincerity. Their devotion is diminished and not increased by a stupid sermon, an affected posture on the part of the clergyman, habits on the part of the congregation with which they do not sympathise. A dull and dreary service irritates them, and they come away from church in a critical state of mind, which they feel to be unwholesome. They can picture to themselves a form of worship which would excite their devotion, and express their religious feelings, but as this cannot be had, the best thing for them to do is

to expose the integrity of their own religious sentiments to as few trials as possible. Their wisest course is to go to church as seldom as may be compatible with a decent discharge of Christian duty.

Such a position as this has an appearance of great strength. It appeals to us by its apparent effort after straightforwardness and sincerity. But how should we regard it if it were applied to other parts of life? If a man were to say: "The society of my fellow-men is irksome to me, because their ideas are pitched at a lower level than mine; their imagination is gross, their interests are narrow, the conventions which make a common life tolerable to them are to me an intolerable hypocrisy. They meet together and seem to be benefited by one another's presence; but their talk is beneath me. To see them together only disgusts and irritates me, it disturbs the placid serenity of my own clear conscience, it lowers my entire tone, and dispirits me beyond endurance." What should we say to one who spoke like this? Should we not indignantly protest against his fundamental conception? Life, we should say, cannot be lived by each one for himself; nor is it possible for one to live in isolation from his fellows. Moral progress, we should point out, consists in constant self-development and constant testing of the results of our self-development by intercourse with others and efforts on their behalf. Nay, though the two processes be severed in word, they are not divisible in deed.

The more man advances in moral progress, the less consciousness is there in him of difference between acts done for himself and acts done for others. That man, we should say, is not the greatest nor the most remarkable in character, who cultivates the greatest number of individual eccentricities, but who breathes an atmosphere of the broadest manhood. Not the foibles, not the affectations, not the trivial sensibilities of the individual move us to admiration, but rather the greater completeness and depth of qualities which we recognise as belonging to all men. Society is stern in her dealings with the rebel. He receives from her no mercy; often we have occasion to deplore how unforgiving she is, and how the affected utterances of a morbid youth sometimes dog the healthier man through his whole life's career.

The claim of the individual to be allowed to consider only himself in his actions—to use life merely as an exercising ground for the direct development through his own care and training of his own higher self,—this claim is always ruthlessly set aside. It is a natural one for the opening mind to make, when first the greatness of its future opens before it. But either the hard pressure of practical necessities drives it away, or increased thoughtfulness discloses a higher law, or faith in God shows life as a probation of which the incidents are disposed by Providence for our learning and perfecting. Happy is he, who by that means has realised the full meaning of the truth, that whosoever

would save his life must lose it. He who would build up a strong and lasting self must not try to gain force by hardening his accidental character into stubborn solidity; he must not hope to become great by forcing his little stream to flow within narrow banks, and so producing a shallow intensity of character which is sometimes mistaken for vigour.

Yet this one-sided intensity is common among us at the present day. It is a natural consequence of greater moral earnestness and rapid increase of knowledge which has not yet been codified and arranged. There is a tendency for each man to be possessed with one set of ideas, intellectual or practical, as the case may be, which he has made his own by thought or by experience. These special ideas he is bent on propagating or applying, to the exclusion of all others. In the pursuit of these, the spirit of intolerance is as rife as it ever was. There is a social and a legal toleration, which is rendered necessary by the multifariousness of opinions and practices. No party is now so strong as to be able to enforce its opinions on all other parties combined. Weakness renders necessary a practical compromise. But the real tolerance, which is founded upon a clear conception of the many-sidedness of truth, is far from being common even amongst those who make toleration a part of their creed. Men are still convinced of the exclusive rightness of their own position. They still thank God that they are not as other men are. They still look

down from a lofty height of knowledge upon the mass of struggling humanity at their feet. They still exclaim in their hearts, "As for this people that know not the law, they are accursed".

This spirit of individualism is checked by the sanctions of social morality in ordinary affairs; but it finds a refuge in matters of religion. There, it has done much to produce disruption and anarchy. The rights of the individual conscience are cultivated to a point of morbid sensibility. A man is thought better of, if his delicate conscience revolts from the plain food which is good enough for his neighbour.

That the rights of the individual conscience are paramount in matters of religion must at once be confessed. But they are also paramount in matters of social obligation. A man's opinions on all points must be honestly and carefully formed, and honestly and carefully expressed, but he must not regard the bold expression of them as the chief duty of his life. He is bound to consider his duty to his fellow-men as well as to himself. Certain opinions may speculatively seem to him to be most true, and certain actions may seem to him to follow logically from those opinions. But, in determining how he ought to act, he is bound to remember that his acts affect others besides himself, that the bald expression of his own superiority to common prejudices is not the highest duty of man. I need not remind you of the admirable practical wisdom with which St. Paul

lays down and applies the principles of Christian casuistry.

In matters affecting society no man is permitted to indulge in this unbridled self-assertion. We are all of us compelled to allow that the world was not created for ourselves alone, but has to be shared by us equally with others. Society does not, observe, interfere with a man's opinions, or with the expression of those opinions. It only requires that they should be expressed in an orderly and a seemly way. It is concerned in preventing rebellion and revolt, not in checking orderly progress. Men are compelled to recognise in social matters the force of traditional training, which they have to overcome before they can make their own opinions prevail. They are bidden to persuade, not to coerce; they are bidden also to persuade reasonably, to enter into their opponents' point of view, to discuss matters with them, to remodel their opinions or extend their sympathy from within, and not to hope to change violently their conduct from without. In this way society protects itself, preserves its organic unity, and develops by progressive stages.

In religious matters there is no such organic unity, and consequently no bar against individual self-assertion. Nay rather, there is a tendency to credit this self-assertion with some noble motive, to put it down to a refined tenderness of conscience or a scrupulous integrity, which is most careful not to injure its own purity. The separate arguments which it brings forth

in defence of its procedure have much weight in them; but they have this fault, that they isolate a man from his surroundings, they regard him as though he existed only for himself, and had no relations toward his fellow-creatures. As against the hardships of the individual, and the shocks which his sensitiveness receives from joining in the worship of his fellow-men, let us set the good which he may gain and do. Let us ask him to consider what it is from which he cuts himself off, what are the benefits which he sacrifices, and whether his object can be gained only by the method which he pursues.

First, then, what are the advantages which a man loses by not attending public worship? Its great benefit now, as in the Apostolic times, is the realisation of Christian brotherhood, the sense of the assembling of ourselves together, the feeling clearly brought home to us of our common destiny, of our common duties to God and man. Public worship sets this before us in a symbolical and imaginative form. The dwellers in a little district meet all together, and offer prayers for themselves, for their country, for mankind: they join in offering praises to the great God of all the earth; they listen to the universal lessons of His Word. To the narrow-minded man such a prospect offers no charm. To the man engaged in the assertion of his individual self, the lesson of public worship is an intolerable one to learn. He ofttimes deceives himself by the excuses which he makes to avoid what he feels

in his heart of hearts to be a duty. Yet the very pettiness of his excuses reveals the real cause of his conduct. If he really wished to be drawn together to his fellow-men, would he be deterred by a trifle from proclaiming himself to be bound together with them along the same road of life? Would the intonation of the minister, would the behaviour of his fellow-men, would a word or two here and there which did not express quite exactly his own feelings, would things like these be strong enough to keep a morally healthy man from public worship? In social and political matters there is no such fastidiousness. We see in them clearly enough how slowly changes in popular usage come about; how needful it is that old conventions should be kept up which are useful for the maintenance of society as a whole, though they do not express the highest knowledge or deepest feelings of the most cultivated man. Let a man try to educate the mass of people up to the level of his own convictions, and outward forms will adapt themselves soon enough to the new inward meaning. We are indignant with men who busy themselves with noisy protests in matters of social or political organisation. Why should men expect a more rapid change in religious than in social matters? Why should they demand, as the price of their readiness to make open profession of their Christian aims, that the sentiments, practices and expressions of their fellow-worshippers should exactly accord with their own?

This is the first help which public worship gives. It removes the individual into a larger and broader sphere than that of his ordinary life, it bids him see himself as a member of a great spiritual commonwealth, it bids him regard the largest aspect of man's spiritual progress. In proportion as the individual's cultivation has advanced, there is often an increased intolerance. He has advanced so far: why should he wish to go farther? The region of thought and action which he has mapped out for himself seems so adequate, so wisely planned, that he shrinks from having it broken into. Rude contact with the world of society or of politics does not ruffle him: there, coarseness and a rough way of dealing with questions must be expected. But he winces before the subtler influence of a broad outlook upon the spiritual world: he will not willingly face the contact of an inner life larger than his own, of a spiritual world of immeasurable vastness. He is content enough to view his fellow-creatures as submitting themselves to his teaching, learning his views, and accepting his nostrums for their own good. But to see them as parts of a great spiritual kingdom, as fellow-travellers with himself through a troublous world, to feel as all kneel together in God's presence that in His sight all, it may be, are equally foolish, equally ignorant, —this is an attitude of mind he cannot attain to. Yet this is the attitude of mind which public worship demands. All prayer means self-humiliation in God's

sight. But public prayer means self-humiliation, not only on the ground of private errors or personal misdoings. It involves as well a confession of the inadequacy and incompleteness of our general view of life, of our failings, not only with reference to an abstract standard, but with reference to the mass of our fellow-men, of the need of a deeper feeling of unity with our brethren who kneel around us, though their opinions be different from our own, or even repugnant to us.

This is no easy frame of mind to attain to. It is precisely the one which is most alien to the mind in its first stages of emancipation, before deeper insight has brought greater breadth of view. Many men rest content with this stage, and never get beyond it. Do they not see and know? They have laid hold upon some part of thought, and followed it up through a few of its stages, and then built for themselves a fool's paradise, convinced that what they have seen is all, and refusing to look outside the little plot which they have fenced in for themselves. Their fellow-creatures they are ready to instruct and to compassionate; they fight for them, they play the philanthropist to them, they will do their utmost to advance their rights. But it is always from a superior point of view. They will labour for the good of mankind; but it is with the fiery zest of smiting down an opponent in the way. They will work with zeal in the cause of philanthropy, while they cannot treat with tenderness, or even with

respect, an equal whose opinions are not the same as their own.

Is it wonderful that a temper of mind such as this finds public worship irksome? Its energies are stifled in the clearer and purer air of larger duties into which it is suddenly called. The Pharisee who went to public worship from a sense of public duty, and thanked God that he was not as other men were, must have been tempted sometimes in his quieter thoughts to complain, that public worship was after all dull and unedifying to himself.

It is on these general grounds that the duty of public worship is to be maintained. The man who is not a Christian, and who considers it his duty to war against Christianity, is of course bound to abstain from Christian services. But he, who calls himself by the name of Christ, ought to be glad to join with his fellows in prayer and praise to the God whom he acknowledges. To let little differences stand in the way of discharging this great duty is unworthy of any broad-minded or sanely-minded man. To refuse stubbornly to join with our fellow-men for a common object, because we think the method they are adopting is not quite the best, is to show an unworthy perverseness and morbid littleness of mind, and is in no way likely to bring about a peaceable change in the direction we would wish. Those, who lightly forsake the assembling of themselves together with their fellow-Christians, expose themselves to no slight moral danger, and

cripple their usefulness by an act of morbid self-assertion.

These considerations are applicable everywhere at the present day. But they are applicable in a special way in this place. The question of attendance at College Chapel is one which every one has distinctly brought before him. To the old custom of mechanical attendance in conformity to an outward rule, has succeeded a spirit of reasonable latitude in such a matter. It is no longer sufficient for those whose duty it is to advise the young, to refer them to the rule of the College. The question has to be approached upon broader grounds.

If public worship be useful as a means of enabling us to realise our Christian brotherhood, how important does it at once become in such a society as a College. Of the teaching of Oxford one great part is given by the place itself, its buildings, its traditions, its history, the intellectual atmosphere which it has inherited. Another part consists of the mutual action upon one another of different characters, which are brought into daily contact, and which are all bound together by the tie of a common object. Only a third part of the influences of this place consists in the educational machinery, which is directly brought to bear upon the mind. It is true that this is the most important part, and that it must give the meaning to the others, which are subsidiary to it. The influence of the place and its traditions from the past

can only be fruitful and ennobling if they are enforced by a worthy present. A common life among students can only be secured if the teaching here given holds out adequate objects to be pursued. But though the educational influences are supreme in giving their meaning to the other influences, they owe their power very greatly to the willingness with which they are ready to press those others into their service and to work with them. We are neglecting one great source of power, if we do not aim at making our common life as complete as possible. Whatever minor changes may take place in the methods of teaching and the means of its distribution, the common life of students must centre within the walls of the Colleges. Surely no means are more obvious to make that common life sincere and broad in its sympathies than is attendance at the services of the Chapel. There the highest unity of purpose may be most directly recognised; there the consciousness of a common duty towards one another, deeper than accidental differences, may be most immediately brought home to all.

The aim is too important to admit of the means being lightly let go. Small differences of opinion in points of religious belief ought not to stand in the way of this great end. Small individual scruples must indeed be carefully nourished and highly valued, if they are to override this great advantage.

It may be urged that attendance at daily service is a relic of mediæval custom, which few now think

binding. I answer, that here common life and identity of pursuits admit of chapel services being fixed at times, which do not interfere with any one's occupations. It may be argued, that attendance at daily service during six months in the year contrasts strangely with the absence of the practice during the six months not spent in this place. I answer, that the time spent here is spent under exceptional circumstances. Every one enjoys a large amount of individual freedom and bears a weightier load of individual responsibility than he does elsewhere. The young man has an absence of restraint, necessary for his free development, which he will never have again. He is subject only to a few rules of formal discipline; he lives amongst social traditions in the making and moulding of which he has himself a great share. In the larger world, the rules of social and conventional morality do much to steady and sober a man, to enforce self-restraint within clearly marked limits. There he is surrounded by warnings and restraints, which are absent here. There is little here in a man's surroundings to check individual caprice and individual licence. It is most important that he should learn to check it for himself. It is the most useful part of a moral education that a man should consciously begin to set laws for himself. This cannot be done without a constant reference to first principles, without a constant reminder of the spiritual aspect of life. It is a serious matter, if under the conditions of

life in this place, there should spring up a tendency to neglect on slight grounds anything that may serve to bring to mind the higher aspect of our common life, or that may tend to bring a deeper realisation of our common duties. The fostering of a religious sensitiveness is not a very noble task, nor is the integrity of our opinions best preserved by emphasising ostentatiously small points of difference, and cutting ourselves off from common sympathies.

In the little societies of which Oxford is composed, the consciousness of a common life ought surely to be made productive of noble fruits. Men might surely be ready to confess their recognition of one another as children of a common Father, as bound upon a common quest, as willing to help one another and to learn from one another, as having common wants, common aims, common aspirations. Surely the least imaginative heart ought to be impressed by the simple grandeur of the symbol embodied in the assembling of themselves together in the presence of God.

VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN AIM.

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, 14TH MARCH, 1875.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—*St. Matt.* v. 48.

THIS is a hard saying; who can bear it? What is God, and who are we that we should become like unto Him? God Who is in heaven, we who are on earth: God the Creator, we the work of His hands: God the source of all goodness and all knowledge, we who are continually doing the thing that we would not, and finding that what we would we cannot do; we who "know not anything," we who are "like infants crying for the light, and with no language but a cry". Such are the contrasts which natural religion by itself would set before us: such is one aspect of the relation between ourselves and God. But "thanks be to God for His unspeakable goodness," such is not our only relationship to Him, nor, through Him, to the world which He has made. He has revealed to us that He is our Father, and we are His children. He has revealed it, and thereby made it a belief of universal application, no longer an abstract truth held only

by the philosopher, no longer a charming dream, a graceful aspiration of the cultivated mind. He has shown us that we ourselves, even such as we are, we with all the sordour of our daily life upon us, we with all the external husk of our unloveliness, may be, nay are, the children of God. This, moreover, He has set before us in a shape that may be understood and realised by the unlearned, by the unimaginative. This He has assured to us, by setting forth the model of all that is most godlike in a human life of superhuman beauty, a simple life of surpassing grandeur. And the meaning of that life was confirmed to all generations by Christ's death and resurrection, the pledge and surety of man's reconciliation with God, the earnest of the Christian's inheritance of life. "See what love hath the Father bestowed upon us that we should be called God's own children."

Still, though this is the relationship between us and God, which Christianity alone enables us to realise, we should not perhaps, without an express precept, have ventured to push this train of thought so far as it is carried in the text, "Become ye perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect". There is, we are here told, no limit to the Christian's aspirations, nay, there is a distinct command that he should carry them to the highest point. And this command, observe, comes as the basis for the extension of morality from outward act to inward principle. It is given to account for the inversion of practical prudence and

plain common-sense which Christian morality involves. We are bidden to "love our enemies, and to do good to them that hate us, that we may be the children of our Father, Who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust". We are bidden to look around us, to see God's workings in the doings of His hand, to see His laws in the laws which govern the world, to strive with all our energies to follow all the indications we can find, to "become perfect, even as our Father Which is in heaven is perfect".

This is indeed a glorious command to be called upon to obey. It is a noble picture of life as a whole, it is a view which might fire the imagination and win the sympathies of any eager heart that looked forward to its future. No religion could have a more alluring ideal to set before its votaries, could have a more splendid prospect to unroll before their dazzled eyes.

But the result of a system is expressed in the lives of those who call themselves by its name. To Christians it was told, that they were the lights of the world, the city on the hill which could not be hid. By the force of their words and acts are the kingdoms of this world to be transformed into the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Grand is the ideal of the Christian's life as concerns himself only—to "become perfect, even as his Father Which is in heaven is perfect"—but overwhelming is its grandeur when he considers also that his own advance is raising the

level of the position of his race, is furthering the final consummation of his Master's work.

But does the Christian always realise the greatness of his position? Does every picture of the Christian life succeed in embodying the greatness, the beauty, of that which it professes to represent? Is Christianity always set forth in its loveliness by those on whom has come down the duty of expressing its full meaning to mankind? The record of Christ's life touches by its simple beauty those even who do not call themselves by Christ's name; but page after page of the records of those who have made themselves great names as leaders of the Church of Christ, we are forced to turn over with a sigh.

I wish to say a few words on this point, the duty, the plain absolute duty, to every Christian, not only of framing his character aright, not only of leading a life useful to others, but also of leading a life beautiful and attractive to those around him. This is not an easy thing to do, and it is harder perhaps for the Christian to be attractive than for the careless and indolent. For the Christian recognises, as of paramount importance, the duty of perfecting character by effort, the necessity that this effort should be earnest, should be continuous, should be unceasing. But the effort is painful, the strain is hard to bear. Our progress often seems to ourselves small, we despair of our success. We think how little after all we have achieved, we pine for some peace, some rest, some

refreshment, some release from the perpetual warfare in which our life is spent. We must strive resolutely against this overpowering sense of effort. We must see that all our energies are not swallowed up in this care for our self. We must beware that lassitude arising from our self-watchfulness does not make us lose the opportunity for self-development, which we might gain by interesting ourselves in others. Let us beware of mistaking the means for the end; warfare is for the sake of peace, our struggles must not leave us with hard, aggressive, unsympathetic characters. Let us see that of us too it be not said πολεμοῦντες ἐσώζοντο, ἀπώλλυντο δὲ ἄρξαντες (war was their preservative and empire the beginning of their ruin).

Our life, it is true, is a struggle against self. We must discover the sin which does most easily beset us, ere we can lay aside every weight that prevents us from running with patience the race that is set before us. We must mortify our corrupt affections, we must crucify the old man ere we can be one with Christ. But is this all that our efforts should aim at? Surely not. It is not enough that we should rid ourselves of faults, it is also necessary that we should cultivate virtues. We should not devote ourselves to cure the ailment of some of our members at the expense of the health of the whole body. We should not shut ourselves up in a sickroom, and exclude the light of the outer world, and watch anxiously our disease, and gloomily note down all its symptoms. It

is rather necessary to be cheerful, to mix as much as we can with our fellows, that so gradually a general improvement of our health may cure our ailment sooner and more surely than would over-anxiety and over-care of the particular ill. My analogy, observe, does not imply that care for the ailment is unnecessary, that we should go on heedless of it at first, or that we should in any way neglect it. I do not say that a careful self-watchfulness in trifles is not most necessary, or that particular maxims ought not to be most rigorously adhered to. But these must be tested, and reduced to their proper place, by reference to the general principles on which our life as a whole should be built; we must not exaggerate trifles, we must observe the due proportions of things, we must aim not only at curing this or that fault, but at having a mind whose whole tone is morally healthful. The Pharisees, let us remember, were careful of their little duties; they fasted twice in the week, and gave tithes of all they possessed, even of mint and anise and cumin, but they disregarded the weightier matters of the law, justice and judgment and mercy, and on them the sentence was passed, "The same shall receive greater damnation, for these things ought ye to have done, and not left the other undone".

This, then, is one great use to which the text may be applied. Let us use it in its fullest extent, if not as a principle for ordinary use, yet still as one for frequent reference. Judge your moral progress not

only by considering whether your faults in this or that way have been fewer, whether you have overcome this or that temptation, but consider if you have altogether approached nearer God's perfection, if you have lived more for Him, if you have really loved your brother more, and looked upon the world as a whole in some way more with the eyes of Christ, and seen your fellow-men more in the light of Him who sends His rain on the just and on the unjust.

This is not, I think, an unnecessary caution. Many of us may have felt pained sometimes at the want of ordinary kindliness, it may be, on the part of some really earnest man, whose life has been spent in a battle against self. Many may feel perplexed at seeing how little influence their own earnest struggles against some fault have on those around them; they may wonder and despair at the slight effect their efforts seem to have. It is because the removal of one flaw only does not necessarily restore the broken statue, or make the passers-by pause to admire. Nay, the very effort we are exerting constantly makes us peevish or irritable in the way in which we do a right action, which we have succeeded in forcing from ourselves after a struggle; none of those who have not seen the struggle can give us credit for the ungraceful act. Again, many faults are distorted virtues, many opinions are harmful, only because they are held too one-sidedly, too exclusively by themselves, and would become even good and strong if

they were brought into connexion with other equally important truths. If we proceed too ruthlessly against ourselves, we may be seriously crippling our whole moral being. If we are in too great haste to root up the tares, we may destroy the wheat also. It may often be that to pursue our thoughts further, to follow them carefully to their utmost logical conclusion, either convinces us of their folly, or does away with the error that lay in their partial application. Again, a healthier tone of mind may make many things that now cause us great effort, come more easily. It is not always the easiest or best way to get rid of a fault to attack it openly, to determine to root it out entirely. Often a fault is weakened most surely by strengthening the opposite virtue. It is always more noble to do a good action than to avoid doing a bad one. It is well to feel that we are best attacking the devil by drawing nigh to God. So, whilst we are trying to make our heart right with God, we may quite unconsciously to ourselves be becoming freed from many temptations, be growing strengthened against our lower selves, and our lives may be made easier for us.

Let us try then to use this conception of life as a struggle towards perfection, in such a way as to correct the perpetual sense of effort which would otherwise oppress us. Let us regard our life not only as a defensive, but also as an offensive war. Let us see how our renewed struggles bring with them renewal of strength. Let us

observe not only our symptoms of disease but also our symptoms of health. Let our lives consist not merely of battles against little faults, but let them aim at the formation of perfect characters. We may become morbid and discontented by looking at life only in parts, and considering it as a wearisome series of disconnected occurrences, as a daily round of trivialities, to be gone through and forgotten. We can only become healthy and contented in mind, if we regard life as a perpetual development of ourselves, as a continual struggle towards perfection, as a constant progress both for individuals and for the race. If we look upon ourselves in the light of the commandment in the text, we see more clearly the value of our characters, the true bearings of our actions. We are bound onward and upward; we cannot take the absolute value of our character at any given time as an ultimate standard of our success, a step further and we may see more clearly, and act more firmly. If only this or that duty which now lies before us were ingrained more lastingly into our life, and were more unconsciously done as though it were a part of ourselves, we should see some higher point to reach, from which we could gain a larger view over life and its bearings.

There is then much practical value to be gained by taking this ideal of perfection, as well as the maxims of experience, to guide us in our daily life. But we ought not, while so doing, to limit this ideal; we

should aim at God's perfection, which speaks directly to our heart, and not at the perfection of a system which can be acquired by rule. Let the genuine object of our perfection be the development, not the suppression, of ourselves. This is a lesson rendered most necessary by the history of all attempts at moral progress. It may be seen in the development of other religions at the present day. What we, for instance, call inhuman in the religious observances of the East, their followers exult in as being superhuman. In the history of Christianity itself, we have instances enough of fanaticism to deplore, instances enough of those who thought they elevated the soul by agonising the body, who thought actions were pleasing to God in proportion as they were painful to themselves, who sought to serve God more by serving men less, who thought to obtain greater constancy and greater devotion for the performance of high duties, by cutting themselves off from the training that they might gain by the performance of low and obvious ones. These are historical instances of developments which mankind have lived through; of systems which have formed themselves upon a narrow basis and have consequently failed. And not only have they failed, but they have failed signally, failed by producing the very opposite results to those which they intended. For when the first enthusiasm of those who founded them, and who were enabled by their enthusiasm to mount for a time above the ordinary conditions of man's life, had passed away,

they had cut themselves off by their high-flown aspirations from the ordinary helps which daily life gives to ordinary men. The very height of their aims pulled them down below the ordinary level; they had assumed a basis which they did not really possess, they had built up their lives upon the supposition that they had become what they really had not become. In a few generations their followers were found whited sepulchres; the systems which had been founded with such eager aspirations proved harmful to mankind; men, calling themselves after some sainted name, were looked upon with disgust by those whom they professed to teach.

From the tendencies of these systems, we may learn the results of similar methods applied to our own selves. The same tendencies still show themselves in classes and in individuals when worked upon by high enthusiasm. A war of extermination seems so much better than an attempt to pacify, to unite, and to form a peaceful and orderly community on a new basis. To cut ourselves off from the world seems so much better than to overcome the world. To cast out the devil at once, and sweep and garnish the home to which he is only too likely to return with seven other companions more wicked than himself, seems so much easier than to weaken him slowly, to know his wiles, and learn the limits of his power, till he at length takes himself away in despair. To try and rid ourselves at once and remorselessly of some part of our nature which we feel

to be rebellious seems to the excited mind a much nobler task than to labour to gain self-control, to bring ourselves into subjection, to introduce order where anarchy was before, and so retain our full glory and our full strength. We should rather, in such a case, struggle to obtain the mastery, being convinced that of the gifts that God has given us there are none that are not capable of being used for His service. True, society may be unwholesome, the world may be corrupt, parts of our organisation may have been stimulated to an unhealthy activity, but we ought not therefore to conclude that there are no good elements on which we may begin to work. We ought not at once to assume a harsh attitude of merely negative protest, we ought not to try and deaden entirely our own impulses; we can do much more for others by showing them how to do harmlessly and moderately what they are at present doing immoderately and harmfully. We can do much more for ourselves by making our whole nature strong, and healthful, and sympathetic, than by struggling after a stoicism which has often to be feigned. God sends His rain upon the just and upon the unjust. We too may strive, each one of us, to aim at God's tolerance and long-suffering. Let us have no attempts to hide ourselves from ourselves; let us have no dark corners where we dare not look; let us have no parts of our human nature which we are afraid to face openly, which we try to crush down entirely, which we think to be in their very

foundation unholy. Let us be assured that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and that all we have, we may use to the glory of God. I do not say that it is not necessary to break suddenly with a bad habit; to cut ourselves off from something lest it become too strong for us. Every man knows his own strength. But though some may have to deny themselves peremptorily for their whole lives, let them not become harsh in so doing. Let them not exult that their own weakness should make this necessary, but rather let them keep before themselves an idea of perfection in which the whole body, fitly framed together, may grow up into a temple of Jesus Christ, and be the fit abode for His indwelling spirit.

This is the Christian's aim, "Be ye therefore perfect"; but perfection is not to be hastily clutched at, is not to be instantly assumed, is not to be found in any positive and unmistakable system of life, which is the same for all. Above all, it does not lie in exclusion. It must not be solved by an arbitrary limitation of the problem, by any assumption framed for the convenience of a system. We must be "perfect, even as our Father Which is in heaven". We must learn from God, learn from ourselves, learn from the world around us; we must bring all we know, or think, to bear upon our daily lives. So may we obtain a solution of the difficulties arising from the strife between our souls and all that hampers them; between what we would do and what we can do. So may we get rid of the

trivialities and littlenesses of life, of all that vulgarises and debases it, and robs it of its God-given glory: so may we strive to serve God in the beauty of holiness, so may we become like unto Him Who lived a peasant's life, and had not where to lay His head, yet spake as never man spake, and the sinners washed His feet with their tears, and wiped them with the hairs of their head. So may we gain a foothold outside the changes and chances of this mortal life:—

> As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm;
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

IX.

THE PASTOR AND HIS PEOPLE.

PREACHED IN EMBLETON CHURCH ON 9TH NOVEMBER, 1884.

Because I have you in my heart.—*Phil.* i. 7.

IT is but natural that during these last few months I should have thought much over my life and work in this parish. I have thought over what I wanted to do, what I tried to do. My meditations passed on to the larger and less personal question, of the position and duties of a parish priest in the Church of England. It is a subject which can rarely be spoken of in the pulpit. A clergyman does not generally like to describe the duties of the priest, lest he be suspected of drawing an ideal picture of himself. Perhaps he shrinks from setting forward a standard which he knows himself to be too feeble to reach. Nor, again, does a clergyman like to speak of the difficulties of the priestly life, lest he should seem to be indulging in unmanly complaints, or to be making special reference to individual grievances. Hence, it happens quite naturally, that the laity hear little of the duties and difficulties of the clerical life, and perhaps often fail to sympathise

fully with them. It seemed to me that for the subject of my last sermon, I could not choose any more suitable than this. My time here is now over. I know that your kindly feelings prompt you to judge me more leniently than I can judge myself. I would ask you to let those feelings deepen into a broader charity, not to myself, but to the office which I hold. I would ask you to consider how difficult a clergyman's life really is. I would bespeak your sympathy, your help, for my successor. I would ask you to strengthen his hands, and esteem him very highly for his work's sake, for his office's sake. For this purpose let me tell you what, in my opinion, his work ought to be, and I doubt not, will be.

I think there is too great a tendency to judge a clergyman solely from what he does in church. No doubt it is very desirable that a clergyman should have a clear voice, be a good reader, a good singer and an eloquent preacher. These, however, are natural gifts, which are not given to every man. Many excellent clergymen need allowance to be made for weakness of voice which has come upon them in the course of years. But there is one thing which you have a right to expect, that is, that a clergyman should conduct the services as carefully as he can. Better than a clear voice is earnestness of manner. Better than eloquent words is the conviction in the hearer's mind that the words are spoken from the sincerity of the speaker's heart. A clergyman is bound to con-

sider that everything that concerns the conduct of Divine Service is of great importance. All should be careful, orderly and decorous. Too much pains cannot be taken to make the Church a house of holy memories, and to bring the full meaning of its services before the attention of reverent worshippers.

The pulpit, again, is a great means of edification. Every one considers it to be so, and almost every one is a critic of sermons. I would urge upon you the need of a gentle judgment. Remember that week after week, and year after year the preacher has to put before you familiar truths. If he is not always successful in making them clearer to yourself, remember that you are only one in the congregation. Perhaps his words impressed another. Perhaps you yourself were inattentive. Perhaps you did not bring a mind which sought after knowledge. Perhaps the qualities which the preacher urged were beyond your spiritual capacity. Remember that if we would be taught, we must have teachable minds. Before you condemn a preacher for not doing his part to your satisfaction, stop and consider if you did your part of bringing him a patient and attentive listener.

Moreover, if you praise a sermon, praise it not for its style, nor for its eloquence, but for its application to yourself. The preacher's object is not merely to interest you for the moment, but to give you food for meditation in the coming week. It is not the sermons which satisfy us when we hear them that are most

valuable to us. Often, sayings that we resented when they first came before us, prove upon reflection to be most useful. The very fact that they insisted on something which we overlooked or neglected, made us feel rebellious at the time; but the thoughts which they suggested came back to us, and forced themselves upon our notice, till gradually we were driven to admit their truth, and then we felt ourselves richer by a new possession. No preacher has the right to claim that things should be believed merely because he says them. But any serious utterance, spoken to you by one who has the care of your souls, demands at least your consideration. Search the Scriptures, search your own hearts to see if these things be so. Accept them for the truth's sake. Be thankful that you have been reminded of something which had been neglected or forgotten. Remember that the preacher is often preaching to himself as much as to you. He may have seen some fault in himself against which he has striven. He is exhorting himself as much as others. He is exposing the weakness which he feels in himself, for your good, that you may profit by his experience. The preacher's greatest reward is to hear quoted some little remark that he has made, is to find that his words have been treasured, and have awakened an echo in another's heart. He speaks best when he speaks most frankly, when he tells you most simply what he himself has felt.

The clergyman's influence centres in the services of

the Church, and in the words which week by week he is privileged to address to his hearers. But it is his own earnestness which can alone give life to what he says, and it is his knowledge of his hearers which alone can enable him to speak so as to be easily understood. He must teach others what he has already taught himself, and if he is to teach them what is likely to be useful to them, it must be because he knows them. The first duty of a clergyman is to make clear to himself the relation in which his office places him as regards his people. Think how great a difficulty that is. How much consideration it requires; how much care; how much charity; how much largeness of heart; how much freedom from prejudice and personal feeling; how much sincerity of intention. A clergyman has constantly to examine himself to see that his heart is right. He has constantly to overcome feelings of disappointment. He has daily to renew his love towards men by renewed communion with the loving heart of Jesus.

Think again how this stands. The Gospel shows us a world made by God, in which are placed men who are God's children, called to do God's will, sanctified by God's indwelling Spirit. The soul's progress of each is of infinite importance in God's eyes. Each day each soul is drawing nearer to God, or moving further from him, is growing more holy or less holy. This is what Jesus tells us of ourselves and our fellow-men. But when we go out to our daily work, how

does the matter stand in our eyes? Do we feel its truth to ourselves? Do we behave to others as though we felt it about them? You know how easily this impression is rubbed away. A little irritation, a little grievance, a conflict of will, a business jealousy, any trivial thing makes us feel cold towards our brother, turns him in our eyes from a brother to a foe. A priest is bound, as his first duty in dealing with others, to pierce through this mist whereby the world strives to hide the truth of God. He must strive after the charity that "believeth all things, hopeth all things". He must endeavour always to look on the world in some way as God looks on it. He must keep before his eyes the sacredness of every human soul, yes, even of those who are most plunged in wickedness and sin. He has to go on his course, watching for opportunities of usefulness, thinking how he may best succeed in awakening more seriousness about spiritual things, examining himself for his own neglect, for his own cowardice it may be, endeavouring to find out new ways of speaking, more forcible illustrations of the Gospel truths, more intimate means of conveying them to the souls of others. He has many disappointments. His exhortations produce little effect. The number of communicants does not perceptibly increase. He hoped, in preparation for confirmation, that he had succeeded in convincing some of the need of careful attention to the means of grace which our Lord Himself ordained. He sees them drop off from their

attendance at the Holy Communion. He notices little things which convince him that their love to Christ is waxing cold. You do not know how much pain and grief is caused to the zealous priest by disappointments of this sort.

I said that a clergyman's usefulness must depend on his knowledge of his people. This again is by no means an easy task. It is one for which especially I would bespeak your help for my successor. A clergyman's energies must be given very greatly to an attempt to understand the ways of life, the modes of thought, the daily occupations of those amongst whom he lives. It is useless for him to warn them against temptations to which they are not exposed. It is useless to appeal to motives which they do not understand. It is useless for him to seek illustrations from subjects which are unfamiliar to his hearers. He must try and discover, as near as may be, exactly how they live and what they do, and what they aim at. No task could be more difficult. It requires calm judgment, penetration, tact and prudence. Even when a man has done his best, he cannot be sure that he is right. I am afraid that it is natural for us all to wish to appear better than we are, to try to keep up appearances, to use language that says what we think we are expected to say, but which has no real meaning to us. In talking to a clergyman, people are particularly liable, not so much from intention as from habit, to say what they are expected to say. They recognise

him as the representative of religion and morality. They make remarks which they consider appropriate to his position and calling. They talk at him, in fact, instead of talking to him. They do not tell him their real thoughts, or opinions, or difficulties. He has to find these out slowly for himself, and it often happens that people do not thank him for the discovery. They do not thank him at first, but in the end they will admit that the clergyman's usefulness must depend on his real knowledge. It is foolish to try and hide your symptoms from a doctor, yet that is not seldom done. It is of no avail to try and hide from a clergyman the actual facts of the daily life of those to whom he has to minister. The best means of helping him is to treat him as a friend, to allow him to be intimate with you, to let him talk to you freely, and to answer frankly in return. Do not keep him at arm's length. Do not suspect his intentions. Conceive it to be at least possible that he should be seeking only your good. He may, nay he will, make mistakes. He will not be always wise, any more than another man. But suppose to yourselves that he is doing his best, and make allowance for his occasional want of wisdom.

A clergyman is often called a *minister*, and ought to rejoice in the name. Minister is the Latin name for a servant. The clergyman is your servant, on whose services you may call at any time, whom you may use at your will. Let me say, for my own part, that I always regretted that you did not use me more

—that you did not give me more work to do. I was seldom summoned, though always expected, in cases of sickness. I have generally been left to find out for myself those who were ill. Sometimes I have not found out till it was too late, to my very great sorrow and regret. You would make his work much easier to my successor, if you would let him know of cases of illness. Remember that you have a right to his services, and can claim his help whenever you need it. Remember that he is your *minister* or servant. Remember also that he rejoices to be so considered, and that nothing gives him more pleasure than to be actively employed.

But if he is your minister, he is at the same time the "steward of the mysteries of God". He has to serve you, but it is in God's name and for God's glory. He has to serve you faithfully, but not always in the way which you would prescribe. He has to labour for your good, but he cannot hope always to please you in so doing. I am afraid that, in the course of his work, a clergyman must often expect to be misunderstood—to be misrepresented—to have hard things said of him. A little consideration will show you why this can scarcely be avoided, unless his people give him exceptional consideration. For think what it is that a good man ought always to be doing within his own heart. He ought always to be trying to make himself better, and for this purpose he ought to be constantly discontented with himself. He must know his own faults, and guard against them. He

must know the temptations to which he is most exposed, and must strive against them. He must always be endeavouring to raise his whole life to a higher level, to advance daily nearer to God. For this purpose, he must, above all things, beware of self-satisfaction. He must be constantly saying to himself, "You might do better than this, if you were more in earnest, if you tried harder". Now, if a good man must so deal with himself, he must also strive so to deal with others. He should never forget that his object is not to make people satisfied with themselves, but dissatisfied : not to leave them as they were, but to exhort them to advance in the way of godliness. Too often, people talk as if a clergyman's chief duty was to make himself pleasant, as if he were bound above all things to strive to be popular, and to avoid all questions which might draw upon him antagonism or gainsaying. A moment's reflection would show you that this cannot be so. His life and works may be attractive in the eyes of those who are themselves striving after God. They cannot fail to be taken as a reproach by those who persevere in the way of wickedness. To such, there is no escape from it, a clergyman who does his duty must always be an annoyance. However kindly he may be, however ready to help them, however gentle in his dealings with them, still they feel that he wishes them to go in a direction which they know in their hearts to be right, but which they do not mean to follow. Few men dare to mock

at godliness in itself; but it is an easy matter to mock at one whose duty it is to teach godliness and to exhort all men to practise it. It is quite natural that men, who know that they are leading sinful and godless lives, should excuse themselves in the eyes of others by abusing the Church, or the clergy generally, or the particular clergyman whom they see most of. It is quite natural that they should resent his zeal; that they should wish that he would leave folks alone, and be content to say his say on Sundays in church to those who choose to go and listen, and then should leave the week-days to them, to follow their own will, without any uncomfortable feeling of even an unspoken rebuke. In this conflict of evil against good, I think that every one ought to take a decided side, and speak his mind. Never hear a man wrongly attacked without defending him: never hear wrong motives attributed without raising your voice in protest. I say this not for the clergyman's sake: it matters little to him what is said against him. He must feel like St. Paul, that he stands daily before the judgment-seat of God. "It matters little," says the Apostle to his lukewarm friends at Corinth, "that I be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self: there is one that judgeth me, even God." It matters little what you do so far as your clergyman is concerned; but there is a power in words to affect the wavering. Vice is generally louder tongued than virtue. Nor need virtue say much. Her words should

be few and should be weighty; but those few and weighty words should none the less be spoken, and virtue should not be entirely silent.

Again, it is said that a clergyman should confine himself to his pulpit and his congregation, and should not meddle with other things or other persons. How far this is true as applied to ministers of voluntary religious bodies I need not inquire; but it cannot be accepted by a priest of the Church of England. He is set over a definite parish; he has a definite district committed to his charge. It must be his duty to secure, so far as he can, that everything concerning the life of his people should be arranged so as to lead them unto God. He must try to remove all stumbling-blocks from their path, to clear away manifest causes of temptation, resolutely to oppose vice and wrong-doing, to labour for everything that can promote social order and decency, and to strive that every one should have all the comfort and well-being that is possible. This, again, is an exceedingly difficult task, and must lead him into many matters which admit of great difference of opinion. Men like to think that their ordinary life is all that could be wished. Even those who wish to improve our common life are not agreed how it can best be done. Some put one thing foremost, others put another. It needs much wisdom to act for the best. A clergyman cannot always have the wisdom necessary for the task; but he ought to have one quality which entitles him to be heard. He

ought to be free from selfish interests. He is engaged in no trade, and has nothing at stake which can warp his judgment of what ought to be done. If he sees an abuse, he ought to say so. If anything strikes him as likely to amend it, he ought to speak out. I need not tell you how thankless a task this is. Changes and reforms, which every one will bless in the future, are seldom popular when they are made. No one likes to be more unpopular than he need be. When you see a clergyman expressing an opinion which is contrary to the general opinion, credit him with a good intention, even if you differ from the wisdom of what he says.

Finally, the priest of the Church is concerned—must be concerned—with every one. He speaks plainly sometimes about something which he thinks unwise or imprudent in some one's conduct. It is, alas, too natural that the person so reproved should at first feel angry, and then excuse himself, and only after a time begin to consider—if, indeed, he ever does consider—whether the reproof was needed or no. Still it is a clergyman's duty to speak when he thinks that any good purpose may be answered by his speaking. He must watch over the progress of each individual soul. He must try to build up each individual character. For what is the end and object of his labour? Listen to the words of St. Paul: "We preach Christ, the hope of glory, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus".

Let me say, in conclusion, a few words only about myself and my work among you. "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," that has been the aim, most imperfectly pursued, that has been always present with me. I have not dealt with you only as a congregation—you have been individually before my thoughts. I have wished to be on the completest terms of intimacy that you would each admit. I have tried to turn from talk about trivial things to the more important questions concerning our life and character. I have met with more answers than I had any right to expect. I have met with more kindness than I deserved. If I have taught you anything, you have taught me much in return. I go away from my intercourse with you a wiser and, I trust, a better man. For all your kindness to me and mine, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Every friendly word that has been spoken to me, every mark of confidence, I cherish in my memory. If you think of me in time to come, think of me as one who cared much for you. Believe that, with many failings, I was still true to one great principle of the pastor's life, "I had you in my heart". I will ever pray for you "that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ—being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God".

X.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION HELD BY THE BISHOP OF NEWCASTLE AT ALNWICK, 21ST DECEMBER, 1884.

The work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ.—*Eph.* iv. 12.

WE are assembled to-day on an occasion which is almost historical. This is probably the first time since the days of the old Bishops of Lindisfarne, that the dwellers in this part of Northumberland have been summoned to share in the solemn act by which the unbroken continuity of the Church of Christ is expressed and maintained. The restoration of the old ecclesiastical organisation of Northumberland has brought many and great advantages. Amongst them is the possibility of setting more clearly forward before the eyes of her children the system, the order, the life of the Church. You are here to-day to aid by your prayers those who are to be called to the sacred ministry of the Gospel. You are here to listen to the solemn obligations which the Church lays upon its officers; you are here to witness the care with which the Church strives to maintain itself, as "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and

Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone".

I would ask you earnestly to remember this as the one great claim of the Church. It is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets". It takes its stand upon Scripture as the Word of God. It takes its stand upon Scripture as a whole, not choosing some parts and omitting others; not following ingenious theories; not changing with changing opinions, but holding by the teaching of the Apostles, by the usages and the ordinances of the Apostolic age. It is not the result of man's wisdom; it does not justify itself by motives of human prudence. It claims a Divine origin—a Divine mission. Its power is the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. The teaching of the Church is a complete system. It does not take some doctrines and exalt them at the expense of others. It sets before its people the entire truth of the Gospel. Its organisation is a complete organisation; you cannot take part of it and reject the rest. All hangs together; all is harmonious; for the building is "built upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone".

This truth is sometimes forgotten. Men sometimes speak of the Church as though its organisation could be altered at will. Its energies may be devoted to new kinds of work. Its methods of action may be developed or improved; but its constitution rests on the certain warrant of the Word of God, the sanction

of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. If that constitution were altered the Church would cease to be the Church. It might be an active religious body; it might do much useful work for the good of man; it might labour earnestly for the glory of God; but it would have given up its great function, "the edifying of the body of Christ".

I wish to speak this morning on two points: the Church as the Body of Christ, and the work of the Christian ministry to edify, or build up, that Body.

1. The Church is the Body of Christ. According to the purpose of God each man is left to work out his own salvation. God educated mankind for the Gospel. His revelation has been progressive and continuous. From the beginning God's Spirit strove with man, but man refused to hear His pleading voice. Gradually, God prepared the way for a fuller knowledge of Himself. He chose the seed of Abraham to be his peculiar people. He stamped upon their history the memory of their sacramental deliverance from the land of Egypt. He planted them in a goodly land by His mighty power. The Jewish Church was in direct covenant with God. We know how ill it used its precious privileges; we know how Israel went astray like a broken bow. But still God's purposes progressed. By repeated chastisement, Israel was purged from idolatry. The Jews learned, after centuries of teaching, to know Jehovah as their Ruler, and to trust in Him as their King.

Still their worship was imperfect, because of the hardness of their hearts. They escaped from idolatry only to fall into formalism. They could not worship God in spirit and in truth. But the rudiments expressed in the law were to be more fully explained; and in the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son to give men a new, a closer, an intimate relationship to Himself. Jesus lived and died for men, and men's eyes must ever be fixed upon that life and death. But the revelation of Jesus, though complete in itself, was to be progressive in its extension through the world. He came as our Saviour; He came to make men at one with God; but He came also as the great founder of a Church, by means of which the fulness of the Divine purpose towards men was to be perpetually displayed. The little leaven was to leaven the whole lump. The manifestation of God and of man's spiritual life, which was made in the flesh to the little band of disciples that gathered round the Teacher by the Galilean Sea—that manifestation was to be reflected far and wide till the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. "Ye are the salt of the earth," "Ye are the light of the world," said Jesus to His wondering followers, who knew not the glory of the work whereto they were called. The world in its pomp and pride rolled on in darkness. That darkness could only be dispelled by the glow of that light wherewith the Spirit of Jesus filled the hearts of

His humble disciples. The world in its wisdom knew not God. That knowledge, the sum of all knowledge, could only be inspired by those who had felt the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Human courage was never put to a severer test than when the eleven listened to the voice of their risen Lord, bidding them "make disciples of all the world". They saw Him ascend into heaven. They saw the glory of the Godhead. The clouds received Him from their sight, and they would fain have stood gazing rapt with the greatness of the majestic vision. But the angelic voice sounded in their ear, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven?" They withdrew their eyes from the sky, still marked with the track of the clouds of glory. They gazed upon the dull grey earth, which lay before them steeped in sin and sorrow. Sadly yet joyfully, fearful but resolute, they went down from the mount to work their appointed work. That earth was theirs, theirs to make anew, theirs to enlighten, theirs to vivify by that new life which God had given them in Christ Jesus their Lord.

Think of that moment in the history of the Church, and let the thoughts of it stir your hearts to-day. On the mount of the Ascension, the Apostles gained a full knowledge of their commission for the work whereunto they had been called. Humbly they went, and waited the coming of that power from on high by which alone their work could be accomplished.

Not otherwise we believe and trust, not otherwise in their degree and kind, are waiting now before you those who are this day to be called in the ministry of Christ's Church. They have been tried and proved, so far as man can try and prove, if they are fit for the work to which they would give their lives. They have been taught, so far as man can teach, what is the work of the minister of Christ's Church. They have pondered these things and their resolution has been made. They await the solemn call to their office. They know that they are powerless of themselves to help themselves. Humbly they seek the special gift of the Holy Spirit of God, wherewith we believe that now, as of old, Christ will endow those who give themselves with their whole hearts to the service of His Church. Think, then, of the deep importance of the ceremony of to-day—of this call of new labourers into the harvest field of God. The boundaries of Christ's Church have spread on every side since the day of Pentecost. Christ's mystical body has been continually built up, and the spirits of just men made perfect beckon us to follow in their steps. But still there is much to do. Still the old problem remains. Still the faithful servants of their Lord must look out upon the world of sin and sorrow with the same eyes as did the Apostles, when they turned away their gaze from their ascended Lord. The world looks dark and cold and dreary. The curse of man's sin is everywhere to be seen. But the

past history of the Church shows that God has ever been with His faithful servants, and that their labours for Him have always been blessed. We, too, may have our hearts to-day filled with the thoughts of the power of our Lord, as had the Apostles who had seen Him ascend into heaven. We have had what they had not, the sure proof of the penetrating influence of the Spirit which Christ has poured upon His Church. The Apostles saw the earth robbed of the glory of their Master's presence, and knew not how the loss of that presence was to be repaired. We know the work which has been wrought by His indwelling Spirit; we know the reality of the tokens of His abiding presence in His Church. That Church has still the old work to do—to bring the world to Christ. The boundaries of Christ's kingdom must be spread on all sides. The meaning of Christ's Gospel must be brought home more powerfully to those who have already accepted it. The body of Christ must in every way be built up and strengthened and purified.

2. I turn to my second consideration. The Church, as the body of Christ, has a regular and organic life. The system of the Church, the organisation of the Church, is the means whereby the Church strives to keep vigorous and strong that spiritual life which proceeds from Christ, and which it is the function of the Church to foster and to spread. All that the Church has to teach is what her Master taught. All that the Church has to give is what her Master ap-

pointed her to give. The preaching of God's Word, the administration of Christ's sacraments—these are the duties of the Church. Through the proclamation of the Gospel comes intellectual conviction, or emotional quickening. Through the administration of the sacraments comes the nurture of the spiritual life. The aim of the Church is to lead all men unto Jesus, that they may see in Him the Way, the Truth and the Life; and then to build them up that they may walk in that Way, that they may hold fast by that Truth, that they may be quickened by that Life here and may live in it for ever hereafter. The ministers of the Church are the ministers of all men for these great, these all-important ends. Now, as always, God works by human means. Now, as always, God calls on all who will to work together with Him for the accomplishment of His eternal purposes. To all men goes forth the call to be fellow-workers with God. Every servant of God, in his way and in his degree, is bound to do God's work, to be in some sort God's minister. But the regular preaching of God's Word requires a regular order of ministers. The administration of Christ's sacraments is committed only to those who are lawfully called and sent. The life of the Church, like all true life, is orderly. The example of the Apostles of the Lord is binding on all after times. "When they had prayed, they laid their hands on them"—such was the warrant given by the Apostles to the first deacons.

Brethren, we believe that these men, now to be admitted into the ministry of the Church, have received in their hearts a call from God for their holy work. We believe that they will receive from on high the help of God's grace so long as they remain faithful to the duties of their high calling. May they never forget how high that calling is—to bring men to Jesus, to build up their lives into constancy, to help them by word and deed to continue steadfast unto the end. Oh, pray for them, for they need your prayers, and your prayers can avail them much. You are not here to-day merely as spectators. This is not a ceremony which does not affect yourselves. The life of the Church, the activity of the Church, the honour of the Church—these are all points which deeply affect her children. Into the hands of her ministers a great trust is committed. Pray that they may show themselves worthy of that trust, that they may believe as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. On their shoulders is laid a great weight of responsibility. Pray that they may be strengthened to bear it by being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It does not concern themselves only that they acquit themselves as valiant soldiers of God; it concerns you also; it concerns the whole body of Christ's Church. Esteem them highly for their work's sake, and let your hearts go forth in prayer that that work may be well and nobly done. Remember that the secret and private prayers of this

congregation are recognised by the Church, following therein the warrant of Scripture, as part of the solemn ceremony of the ministerial call. "When they had prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away." Such was the ceremony by which the direct call of the Holy Spirit to Barnabas and Saul was recognised by the prophets and teachers at Antioch. Your prayers are needed, as the imposition of the Bishop's hands is needed. All are summoned to take their part in the outward act, which owes its validity to God alone.

"They sent them away." Is there not a touching ring in those words? Sent them away from the loving eyes of the Apostles; sent them away from the warm sympathy of their Christian brethren; sent them away into the dull, cold, dead world outside. Such, too, will be the fate of those who are called to-day. To-morrow they will have to go forth to their duties, strengthened and established, yet feeling their weakness and their frailty. Whenever we are called upon to face our duties, we shrink back startled. Who is sufficient for these things? Who is worthy of so high a dignity? Who is of himself fitted to guide the souls of others? We can only do in any degree the work which we have undertaken, when we have learned to cast ourselves unreservedly upon God. "By myself I can do nothing: I can do all things through God which strengtheneth me." Great is the dignity of the Christian ministry, but its dignity lies only in the

increased opportunity for service. The life of a priest, separated from any direct concern with worldly business, freed from selfish cares and distracting pursuits, devoted immediately to the service of God and of his fellow-men—such a life is indeed dignified, such an opportunity for usefulness is indeed noble. But its nobility, its dignity, is not so much inherent in the office itself, as in the way in which it is used. He who has submitted himself to the Master's call, who has said in all devout humility, "Behold the servant of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy will"; he who resolutely works in the spirit of self-forgetfulness, of self-sacrifice, finding his pleasure only in activity in good works—he, however lowly may be his position here, is indeed precious in the Master's eyes. The true priest knows nothing of man's distinctions. To him all men alike are the children of God, and he himself is the servant of all. He deals not with rich or poor, with wise or ignorant; he deals only with souls which God has sent into this world that they may be tried, and purified and perfected for eternity. Do not despise him because he is simple, and is ignorant of what men call the ways of the world. He is bound to be simple, because the word of God is simple, and God loves the simple heart. He is not concerned with the ways of this world, but with the ways of that other and truer world, where we shall know even as we are known. There is no earthly dignity that can compare with the dignity of the

priestly office, if it be exercised not for self, but for God; if it be asserted not by claims for outward respect, but by inward devotion to a life of humble, heartfelt service of all men. Remember, my brethren in the ministry, remember this: your title is held from God only, your dignity rests in obedience, your nobility is a nobility of service. You have no claims upon this world; your attitude towards it should be that you need from it nothing which it can give. Already it affords you only too great an opportunity for work. Your duty towards it is to transform it in some little way into the likeness of the kingdom of heaven. That kingdom of heaven—remember that unless your natural self be changed, and you become as little children, you shall not enter therein. That kingdom of heaven—remember that the first step towards its enjoyment is that you be poor in spirit. You are called to be the messengers of that kingdom; you are called to summon others to enrol themselves as its citizens. If through indolence, through want of sympathy, through arrogance, through self-seeking, you fail to show them an example of true humility, you fail in all things. Great is your calling, but you are called to work for others; great is your dignity, but it is the dignity of labour. All labour is noble, but yours is the noblest of all, for it is the highest labour, and its fruits are garnered directly into the store-house of God.

"They sent them away"—sent away those early servants of the Lord into a world that was entirely

sunk in heathenism and degraded by vice. No kindly eye would look upon them with favour; no friendly voice would wish them God-speed. Alone they went, without human counsel or human sympathy to aid them. Things are better now for the ministers of Christ. Much may need to be done, but much has been done already. Many, very many, there are who will gather round each Christian minister, who will give unsparingly their goodwill and their help. To you, my brethren of the laity, I would earnestly commend those who to-day are called to their office in the Church. Give them no doubtful welcome, lend them no uncertain hand, let them feel no half-hearted sympathy, but esteem them very highly for their work's sake. They need your help solely that they may work harder, better and more wisely: and their work is your work as well. There are many difficulties in the priestly life, which it is hard for you always to understand. Experience in worldly business creates in men a certain outward way of regarding life. You have tried some plan and you have failed. Well, it matters little; you soon dismiss your failure and try some other plan, which may succeed better. You soon learn that it is useless to feel sensitive, or to be disappointed because things have not gone as you expected. Remember that to a clergyman failure is a serious thing, because the interests with which he deals are of a kind that is infinitely important. He did not speak when he ought to have spoken, and the

reflection haunts him that the opportunity may never again occur. He may have produced some results, but he feels that they are not the highest results attainable; he is bound to be dissatisfied and discontented with himself; he is bound to strive onward. He is never free from a sense of responsibility; he is always doubtful of himself. He must seek his strength, I admit, by communing with God. But you can help him by your prayers. Let them always go up to God for him. Pray all of you, pray for the clergy, for your own clergyman, and you will confer upon him a priceless boon. Sympathise with him, and let him feel your sympathy. I do not say show him outward respect for the sake of his office: that you do willingly of yourselves already. But show him your personal sympathy; talk to him of his work, and encourage him to talk to you. You may not perhaps have much time to help him directly, though most of us have some time at least to spare. But you can help him much by showing an interest in what he is doing, by encouraging him to persevere, by gleaning for him now and then testimonies that his work is telling, that he is working in the right way. Believe me that the clergy sorely need encouragement. Believe me they do not value formal respect, but long for sympathy and advice. Let your esteem for their work be shown by your interest in it. Let them feel that friendly eyes are fixed upon them, and that friendly hands are stretched out for their aid.

"The work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God"—what a splendid aim; how far from its accomplishment, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God". Human eyes cannot see this mighty end, human wisdom cannot forecast the process of its attainment. But this is the object of the Christian ministry in all degrees and forms. One faith is to be set forth, and that faith is to lead to a true and saving knowledge of the Son of God. No smaller end is set before us; we may not labour in any narrower spirit. Our hope is in the Lord, and in that hope we are strong. The waves of this world's fancies may ebb and flow, but the truth of Christ stands like a rock amid the eddies. Of that truth the Church is the abiding witness; that truth its ministers are bound at all times to proclaim. May the Church this day be strengthened by sending forth a trusty band, who will be true to their high calling, who will utter no uncertain sounds, who will in their day and generation make this world better by their presence, and hasten in some way the accomplishment of Christ's kingdom.

XI.

THE HOPE OF YOUTH.

PREACHED ON 30TH JUNE, 1888, ON THE COMMEMORATION DAY OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, RADLEY.

Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you.—1 *Peter* i. 13.

I HAVE chosen these words for my text because they contain in a small compass the great characteristics of St. Peter; because they sum up the main points in his character, and explain why he was chosen to be the chief of the Apostles. Has it ever occurred to you to wonder why St. Peter was chosen? Why not rather St. James with his stronger practical sense, or St. John with his nobler soul and higher flights of mystic energy? Why St. Peter? I think because his character was the simplest and most straightforward, built up most clearly on the foundations of faith and hope, of hope especially; the faith of the others might be as strong, but it was not so readily clothed with power by virtue of the presence of hope.

"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you." Hope marked St. Peter to the end of his own career. At the beginning he was impetuous, courageous, restless; he showed the weak-

ness as well as the strength of his temperament. He was rash in act and speech alike; but he was simple, sincere and eminently human, attracting us even when he was weakest. There was nothing about him to conceal; he was a plain, strong man.

Now these are the characteristics which we recognise as the distinguishing marks of youth; and I venture to think that it is not without reason that St. Peter was chosen to be the patron of this College. He was strong where youth is strong, weak where youth is weak; and for this reason, because he had the temper of youth, he was chosen as the rock on which Christ's Church was to be built. We know how he fulfilled his office. Rashness gave way to courage. The words of him who "wist not what he said" and spoke in the strength of what he felt, became the deliberate counsels which guided the Church. Impetuosity became resoluteness, and St. Peter showed in practical life, the decision of judgment and the tenacity of purpose needed by one who was called to a great office of administration and counsel. Still he carried to the end the great characteristics of the boyish mind, which were developed but not abandoned. His strength lay in things obvious, not recondite; simplicity and straightforwardness marked him throughout his career.

My dear boys, keep Peter before you as an example. Learn from him how youth can change to manhood without losing any of its grace, its vigour or its sim-

plicity. Nay, rather it is on keeping these qualities unchanged to the end, that the power and influence of later life depends. Think not of your life here as something which will pass away, as different from the life which is to follow. You do not need in after life different qualities from those which come naturally to you here; you do not need to learn too soon a knowledge of the world, to acquire smartness in conversation or a power of repartee; but you need to work out to their full extent, and not to lose, the noble qualities given by God to each youthful soul. You need to keep always some measure of the impetuosity of youth, its high aspirations, its enthusiasms, its lofty ambitions, its absence of self-seeking, its disinterestedness, hopefulness, and belief in itself. The world will gather round you soon enough. You will all meet with many disappointments. When you leave this place, you will have to face the dangers attendant on a fuller measure of individual responsibility. The helps of a common life and a wise discipline will be in a great measure removed, and you will be thrown back upon yourself. Be true to the self which has been moulded here. Cling to the aspirations which this place has taught you. Do not try to make up a new self after the current pattern which you see around you. "Hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you," and ask the Lord for strength that the teaching of youth may broaden into the courage of manhood.

When you go out first into the world, you will get no credit for good intentions; you will find a cold and critical atmosphere, where only results are valued, intentions are disregarded or distorted, simplicity is never supposed to exist, is not accredited or taken into account. But do not give up in your first despair either your simplicity or your good intentions. Do not think the world cold and dull and heartless, and only moved by calculations. Do not let it wipe off the bloom of your soul and leave you cold and cynical. Do not excuse your own listlessness by empty phrases about the spirit of the age; nor think that there is no place for your aspirations, and that the lessons learnt here have to be changed for something else. The world needs youthful simplicity. Its coldness is only assumed that it may try what you are worth. It wants enthusiasm and nobility and straightforwardness; it cries out for these things. Keep them; determine that they shall never go, but that your life in the world shall be founded on your life at school, that you will not let go all that you have learned here, from this place, from your teachers, from your companions. Determine that you will "hope to the end," and by God's grace will practise "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good repute". The world is not so cold but that you can help to warm it. Live in hopefulness, in the sense of a mission, of preparation for your Master's call, of submission to Christ.

"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you." Take all your thoughts to Him. Ask Him to build you up and strengthen you, that you may help to build up and strengthen one another here. Even here you may have no small influence over your fellows. The little world of school, moreover, may influence the larger world outside. Boys may carry home to their parents, weary with work and anxiety, the spirit of hope and joy, the breath of hopefulness and perseverance to the end.

In after life there may, perhaps, sound in your ears the rebuke which Jesus sent by St. John to the Ephesian Church: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love". The first love is the best, my boys. What you now see to be right, what you now wish to be, is truer than anything else which will come to you in after life. You see truth now more clearly than, perhaps, you will ever see it again, for you are not yet warped by the distortions of self-interest. Determine that you will take that vision with you; that you will keep through life the desires, the aspirations, the love of good, the thoughts that filled your hearts when you took your confirmation vows, when you knelt here to receive your first communion. They were true then; they may be the highest truth you will ever see. That is what St. Peter tells you, under the shadow of whose presence you stand to-day. "Hope to the end."

And to you, my friends, who have left this place to face the world and return to-day to look upon old scenes and renew old memories,—to you also may come in this place the message of hope. We cannot look on a gathering of boys such as this without a reproof, a warning, an exhortation that we should renew our youthful feeling of hope. We ourselves, what did we hope to do when we were boys? What have we done? The sight of these young lives bids us look back upon ourselves. It invites us to a retrospect of our own failures, a retrospect which fills us with humility, but I need not say that humility has nothing in common with despondency. Who is not reminded of his former self when he gazes on the young, when he thinks how the world moves on, how generation succeeds generation in the march of mankind towards God? Have we failed, have we fallen out of our places in the great procession? We have failed; which of us does not confess it? We have failed in many things; but as we look upon the faces of these boys, we are reminded that there is hope for the future. The world did not begin and will not end with us.

What parent, as he looks upon his son, does not pray that he may be a better man than he was himself? Who does not confess that if this is to be, it must be because the boy grows up more simple, more hopeful? We have failed because we strove to be too clever; because we were too self-confident and not sufficiently straightforward; because we lacked simpli-

city. But others may succeed where we have failed. In these days, when so much pessimism is in the air, it behoves us to be hopeful. The future is not to those who stand by and say, "It may be, I cannot know, I do not see"; but to those who are simple, hopeful, strong in submission to God, who, in the words again of St. Peter, "look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness". We hope and believe in the eternal power of righteousness, and we shall only be strong in so far as we give ourselves to that eternal hope. May our presence here to-day, and the thoughts which to-day inspires, lift up the souls of old and young alike, and renew in us the spring of that hope which reaches beyond the visible to the invisible, and binds this world around the feet of God.

XII.

THE WORK OF THE MONASTERIES.

PREACHED AT HOLY CROSS CHURCH, PERSHORE, ON THE OCCASION OF ITS TWELVE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY, 29TH JUNE, 1889.

Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.—*Exod.* xiv. 15.

THESE words, dear friends, which were spoken at the crisis of Israel's history—at the very moment when, so to speak, Israel came into existence as a nation—were the motto stamped upon the whole subsequent history of the race. They are words which give us the Divine conception of national duty. Think when they were spoken. The children of Israel—a race of slaves who had lost all the manliness that ever they possessed in the long period of servitude they had spent in Egypt—were called by God to go forth and realise His plans; and as this cowering band stood hearing the chariot wheels of the Egyptians behind them, and seeing nothing but the waters of the Red Sea tossing angrily before them—at that time it was, when their hearts were sunk within them, that they turned to their leaders for guidance. Then the message came clearly forth, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward".

"That they go forward." That is the stamp that God has put upon national history. These words contain within themselves all that is to be said about human progress. They express the fact that progress is to be the law of men's affairs, that God has impressed it upon them. I ask you to take these words as the motto to accompany you in the retrospect of the history of this great building in which we stand to-day. I would ask you to take them as explaining to you the Divine purpose which marks itself in the story of men's affairs. We can only profitably look back upon the past, if we go there to seek lessons for the future. We can only profitably seek lessons for the future, if they are to bring to our hearts hope, eternal hope, greater power in the future than there has been in the past, greater zeal, greater devotion to God's service, loftier aspirations, higher aims, and the constant increase of the standard of man's endeavour. Is not this what you see when you look at Israel's history as a whole. There are constant shortcomings, constant backslidings, constant failures, all kinds of things occurring that are to be reprehended, all kinds of goings back here and there, no progress entire and complete all along the line. But do you not feel all the same as you read the records of the Old Testament history, that throughout the history of Israel, there was a gradual widening of the spiritual consciousness, that there was an increase and a growth, that there was a grander aim, a higher standard being

raised before the eyes of men, that there was progress in spite of apparent failure? Yes, progress, we see it everywhere written as we look back upon the past. The thought of that progress we have to take with us into the future, and I would ask you to keep this thought above all others in your hearts to-day.

The history of this church takes us, you are reminded, back into the earliest times of our national being. This church was intimately connected with the story of the conquest of the Hwiccian land. It was one of the first-fruits of the conversion to Christianity of that band of our Saxon forefathers who wandered along the valley of the Avon, and took possession of this and the neighbouring county. They organised themselves into a rude kingdom; they were converted; they learned to know the law of the Gospel of Christ; and then rapidly there went on the organisation of their ecclesiastical life, which found expression in the formation of the See of Worcester. One of the earliest of the monasteries that was connected with the See, one of the very first that followed after the monastery of St. Peter at Worcester, was the monastery, of St. Peter also, at Pershore. The two were closely connected, dedicated to the same saint, and having the same object, both being the seat of missionaries who were to go forth to carry out the work of the conversion of the Hwiccians, that had been so well and prosperously begun. So this monastery, in which we stand to-day, was at first not what we should

call a monastery in the secondary sense, (the first sense, *monasterium*, being only a great church), not a building inhabited by monks, but originally a monastery inhabited by mission priests, who went about in the rude district that lay along the banks of the Avon, who penetrated the far-off Forest of Arden, who sought out the waifs and strays scattered through what was then an inhospitable region—mission priests formed into a college, who lived at this place at the bidding of their king. For it was the ruler over this land who established this monastery, that it might carry on the work of the Church in the whole region that was committed to his charge. I need not tell you how great was monastic civilisation in this part of England. No part of the country was so thickly studded over with monasteries as the land of the Hwiccians. At the end of the eighth century, there were no less than twenty-four of these monasteries in the land that forms the counties of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. And already at the end of the eighth century, they had changed from their original intention. Originally they were mission priests. But as time went on there was no longer such need for missionary zeal. England, as a country, was converted. There was no more work for the mission priests to do, except indeed for the glorious band who devoted themselves to the conversion of Germany, and carried the light of the Gospel to the far-off shores of the

Baltic. In England itself, it seemed as if the mission work had been exhausted, and the question was, "What is now the use of these monasteries?"

The answer to that question led to the conversion of the mission priests into a body of monks. Again the idea corresponded to the wants of the times. First of all these priests, who dwelt together, were missionaries who went forth into the neighbouring lands. Then these missionaries gave way to monks. It was the same story almost everywhere in England. Mission priests gave way to monks, to men, that is, who lived after a rule, men who lived together that they might pray to God and sing praises to His name. Why did they take the place of the missionaries who had been working in society? The answer is that they corresponded to the deepest-seated feeling in the mind of these rude people, to the desire which men felt of having an expression of a nobler and better life than they were themselves able to live. Ah, to maintain a high ideal of life, how valuable, how useful it is! We cannot wonder that these rude folk in a barbarous age chose from among themselves a certain number, who were to be set aside for the sole purpose of devotion. How the rude thane whose life was one of continual warfare, how the serf who spent his days entirely in work, must have rejoiced to think that at least somewhere afar off, there was a place where men were devoted to God's service, and to that only. Men did not at first hope

that the world would be transfused with the spirit of Christ, so that one who lived in the world would be able in that life to make of himself a sacrifice and an offering unto God. But if they could not hope for this, they said, "Here and there shall be places where men pray and praise God, and they shall pray to God for us, and by their prayers shall the sins of the world be washed out, and by their offerings and sacrifices atonement shall be made for us." It was the notion of vicarious devotion in the world maintaining the light of the Gospel, it was the notion of some one else serving God for them, that led to the conversion of these homes of mission priests into homes of asceticism, or at least of what was meant to be asceticism, homes where men could live free from worldly cares, free from worldly aspirations, free from worldly business, entirely devoted to God's service on behalf of their fellow-men. That was the ideal that they set before themselves, but it was an ideal which was rapidly lost sight of.

Within much less than a hundred years of the time that monasticism had laid its hold upon England, we find that monasteries had turned into comfortable places where great men made provision for those sons for whom they could not provide in the world; or we find that country squires, as we should call them, liked in their old age to turn themselves into abbots, and live in peace and quietness in a monastery, where they were not disturbed by being called upon to discharge

public duties, or go to war, and where they did not pay the same taxes or meet the same troubles as the ordinary citizen. The course of monastic effort was very soon ended. First the homes of mission priests, then the homes of ascetic devotion, then the comfortable abiding places of those who were well-to-do, and who wished to be free from the ordinary and obvious duties of life that fall upon the common man—that is the history of monasticism in short. There were constant revivals. The history of the Church of Christ, and of the institutions connected with the Church of Christ, is the history of constant revivals. We see that never could man's device frame any institution so excellent, or give it an object so noble, that the excellence did not rapidly pass away, and the nobility of the aim soon become debased. No human institution can ever be set up which can be permanent; there can be no abiding form given to the spirit of Christianity. Forms pass away and change; they are nothing unless inspired by God's Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God "bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whither it cometh or whither it goeth". It cannot be confined within any forms, however lofty; it cannot be bound within any institutions of man's contrivance. The history of the Church amply enforces that lesson upon us. There is nothing so good, nothing so noble, that it may not fail and become useless in its turn.

Monasticism did its work. It impressed the imaginations of men, and it did its part in the general

work of English civilisation. This monastery, the great monastery of Evesham, the monasteries scattered in this district, such as Tewkesbury, Gloucester, Bredon, Malvern, Fladbury, wherever they might be, they were all of them at least settled places. And round the settled homes of the monks, there gathered the steady life of industry, and from the industrious community that found its home around the monastery, there went forth the woodman with his axe, who cleared the forests which rendered so much of this country in those days unproductive for human life. For this very reason it was that these monasteries were first of all planted in uncleared lands, in places that man's foot had never trodden, founded that they might open up fresh fields, and new pastures, and extend the limits of man's possessions; and so, long after the spiritual meaning of monasticism had passed away, it still had a work to do for civilisation. Still the monks represented the industrial life of the times, which clustered round their houses; still they represented the intellectual life of the times, which found its only expression in their cloisters; still they represented the life of peace as opposed to the life of war; still the monasteries were the great inns of the land, their doors being always open to the passing traveller; still they fulfilled many wants, which otherwise would not have been fulfilled at all, for the good of men in those ages that are called the middle ages.

Then the next step was that in England the State became more prominent. The central government made good its organisation, and the power of the separate baron fell before the sovereignty of the law. When that was accomplished, men looked upon monasteries as being but survivals of institutions that had no further use. All through the fifteenth century certainly, it was felt that monasticism had lost its use; it was felt that the number of monasteries must be diminished, and they were diminished largely, diminished by outrageous acts that we do not hear much of. Whereas at one time there were 1,200 monasteries in England, there were only 800 at the time of the dissolution. Four hundred had dissolved themselves, or been put out of existence somehow. But when at the beginning of the sixteenth century, England awoke to a new consciousness of life, to a new consciousness of work to be done in the world, then men looked around, and began to calculate what was to be done with the monasteries, and there were scholars who had their plans of turning the monasteries into schools, or making them useful in some way or other for the actual needs of local life. Doubtless great plans were formed by which, little by little, the monasteries should be turned into hospitals, or into poor-houses, or into universities, or into local schools. Something or other men clearly saw would have to be done with them, for they were no longer useful, no longer needed. They no longer had any particular meaning, the time was come when

they must pass away. Pass away they certainly would have done in some way or other, yet none the less, we cannot condone the wickedness and the crimes of those who actually wrought the dissolution of the monasteries. Though it was desirable that they should pass away, it did not follow that they need pass away by a process of violence and fraud, that they should pass away amidst slander and obloquy, without gratitude for what they had done in the past, without any consideration of what use might be made of their resources in the future. It is not true in history that the end justifies the means. We can never look back with any good results, if for a moment we allow that idea to enter into our minds. Too often is that said in the politics even of the present day. Too often is it supposed that if a particular object is clearly desirable, therefore any means whatever towards that end are desirable, or may fairly be used. Dear friends, we must set our faces against that assumption; it saps the very basis of our moral life; and never, as we look back upon the past, are we to forgive or condone deeds of violence, deeds of oppression, deeds of fraud. No good thing was ever done by misrepresentation. The truth stands above all else. It was well that the monasteries should pass away. It would have been well had they passed away in some decent manner. Nothing is to be said, little excuse is to be found, for the violence and oppression which accompanied their actual dissolution. Still less

is there anything to be said for the way in which their possessions were not applied to any public purpose, did not go to relieve the needs of the localities, were not used for any national end whatever, but simply went either into the coffers of the tyrannical King, or else to swell the wealth of families that wished to make themselves great from purely selfish motives. No direct good came to the neighbourhood from the suppression of the monasteries and the taking away of the benefits, which they still conferred upon all those who dwelt around them. The monasteries fell; their possessions were carried away men knew not where. Instead of a place to which they could look, at all events, as a symbol of something that was noble and mighty, there was left to the poor unhappy neighbours only a heap of ruins. That was what happened here as elsewhere.

The possessions of the monastery, not very large, but still such as they were, were sold for a small sum to one who, in consequence, immediately established himself as a country gentleman. Then all the houses and buildings of the monastery were pulled down, and more than half the great monastery church was pulled down also. Then it was, to their honour be it said, that the poor folks of Pershore, poor folks they must have been, came forward with their little offerings for God's honour and service, and bought the remnant of the church, that they might make it their parish church for ever. They bought it from the

spoiler. There is pathos, dignity, splendour, about the deeds of these poor people who bought their churches back. Many churches were bought back in this neighbourhood, Tewkesbury and Malvern for instance, but these were greater places and of more importance than Pershore. Perhaps no place made greater sacrifices than did Pershore at that time, that it might still call some remnant of the church its very own. It was not that Pershore had not a parish church. But the men of Pershore knew what architecture was, they knew what its dignity was, they knew what its splendour was, they had a belief in themselves and the place in which they lived, and they would not see that which they prized highly pass away, and be left a mere heap of ruins. They could not afford to buy all the great monks' church, but they could afford to buy half of it. So half was ruthlessly pulled down, and the rest bought by the parishioners, to be a place where they and their descendants might worship God.

That is the story of this Abbey Church. That is the story of its past, and that is the great lesson it has for us to-day. It tells us of many changes passing over the face of this land; it carries us back through the different phases of our civilisation, but it is gilded with a story of self-sacrifice which brings before us the pathos and dignity of English local life. The men of this little village as it then was, rose and bought their church that it might be their very own for ever. They would not be robbed of the beauty they knew; they would

not have their accustomed landmarks taken away; there was something they would keep, and they would love it all the more because it was the result of an act of self-sacrifice on their part. And as you know, this church, within the recollection of this generation, has been endeared to you a second time by calling for another act of self-sacrifice. The work of restoring this church, and bringing it back again, after ages of neglect, to its primitive beauty, that was the work that fell upon the shoulders of, at all events, the older ones of you to whom I speak to-day. It is, perhaps, endeared to many of you in your own experience by the thought that you too, in the days of your youth, made some sacrifice that you might restore your church to the beauty and dignity of its former state. And so, such as it is, it has come down to us through the ages, through all its many vicissitudes, and they were indeed many.

I have not time to tell you the details of its architectural history; but the mere vicissitudes of the building contain almost the entire history of English architecture. First there was the simple wooden church that rose upon this place, and many times fell into ruin, and was many times restored. Then a simple stone church, quite small, almost insignificant, seems to have existed at the end of the eleventh century, when fire destroyed it. After the time of the Norman Conquest it was rebuilt in stone, mighty and magnificent, corresponding with the splendid rem-

nant of the transept that still exists. Then it was burned down again three times. Three times was it reduced almost to ruins, three times did the exertions of the monks restore it and repair it, and make it fit again for its purpose; and so it comes that we find traces of the different styles of architecture in it at the present day. Three times certainly was this church rebuilt before 1300; three times were different parts added to it; three times did it put on a different appearance as the generations passed, though what remains owes its present greatness particularly to the thirteenth century.

And does not this too teach us how different human life has become as the ages have passed on? This church was burned down on two occasions because it was surrounded by wooden houses. The fires that continually destroyed towns and villages in the Middle Ages are unknown to us now. Surely, we have gone forward in all things that appertain to the comfort and security of life. Have we gone forward, too, in our spiritual life? I would ask you to think of that to-day. I said if we looked back upon the past, it must be to learn the history of progress. We are right to talk about progress, we are right to find traces of it at every turn, we are right in looking forward to the future as a time when progress will be more rapid, yes, but remember that this thought brings its responsibilities. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." I have been asking you to look back upon the history

of your church, and upon the sacrifices that it entailed upon your ancestors in days gone by. Does the retrospect nerve you to love your church better, and to be ready to make more sacrifices for it? Have you learned to associate the fabric of the church with your individual life? Have you caught its symbolism, and do you feel that your daily walk must lead you on the way which lies from the font to the altar? Do you bring here week by week your best thoughts, your noblest aspirations, to have them consecrated afresh to God? Is this church dear to you as a record of your own soul's progress? Think upon these things as you rejoice to-day in what others have done for you. To whom much has been given, of them much is required. There comes to you a voice from the past bidding you also "to go forward".

XIII.

THE COMMON LIFE.

PREACHED BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE SANITARY CONGRESS AT WORCESTER, 1889.

Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.—*Ps.* cxxvii. 1.

IT is in no spirit of mere complimentary speech, but with a deep sense of reality and earnestness, that I say, that few occasions could more strikingly bring before our minds all the greatness of England's past, and all the hopes of England's future, than the occasion on which we meet to-day. I see before me the representatives of all that has made England great in the past, of all that constitutes the strength of our national life in the present. In you, Mr. Mayor, and the members of the Town Council, I see the symbols of that spirit of local self-government upon which the freedom of England has always rested; I see the symbols of those qualities which have made our country great, and which still distinguish it from the other countries of the world. For the spirit of local self-government, the capacity for the management of our own affairs, is the special characteristic of us as Englishmen, our distinguish-

ing inheritance from the past. It is an inheritance to which our own day has added, which daily becomes more precious to us, which we hope takes deeper root, and will increase in the future. And what moral qualities does that power of local self-government entail, not only on those who bear office, but on those who submit to their rule, not only upon the rulers, but upon the people whose representatives those rulers are? It is amazing, it is gratifying, when we think of the amount of civic patriotism which every great English city can display, of the self-devotion to public interests, of the willingness to sacrifice time and money, to give of their best for the good of the community of which they form part, shown by English citizens. This occasion is a great symbol of, and a great testimony to, the unity of our English life, and to the way in which we are striving onwards and upwards to find out a path towards better things. We have reason to be proud of our local institutions; we have reason to rejoice in the feelings of civic patriotism. Woe betide us if we let them go, woe betide us if the love of self-government, which is the foundation of our freedom, does not beat high in the hearts of Englishmen.

And yet you will observe that this sense of local patriotism, of which we are so proud, does not stop short at the boundaries of our own domain. We have no exclusive civic pride. We do not rejoice that we are greater or better than other places. We are content to feel that we are citizens of no mean city. We are

content to have the spirit of a dignified corporate life displayed amongst us. We are content to go upon our way without jealousy, without rivalry, without wishing to put ourselves forward, merely striving that we may be worthy of the vocation whereunto we are called. Our local patriotism is strong and vigorous; but it does not separate us from the great current of the national life. No, rather it leads us more distinctly and decidedly to join ourselves to that great stream, to pour our energies into its mighty waters. We are reminded of that fact to-day by the presence here of the Volunteers. They show the contribution which this city willingly makes towards bearing its share of the national burdens. It is again a characteristic of England that it does not lay burdens upon unwilling shoulders. England can count upon the willing offering of the time, the labour, the patience, the endurance of a sufficient number of her citizens to provide for the work of the national defence. For England rests upon a basis of true freedom; English life is laid upon the firm foundations of duty; England appeals to her citizens, and England knows that this appeal will be readily listened to.

Yet another thought, characteristic of the best side of English life, is suggested by the special circumstances under which we are met to-day. We are proud as a city to welcome guests within our walls; we are proud as a city to think that we shall be the seat for a short time of the deliberations of

those who are engaged in striving to direct the national attention to objects of great and serious national concern; and we gladly welcome the Sanitary Institute. We welcome them that we may listen to the teaching which they bring us; that we may learn those lessons of which we all stand in need, for we desire to go onwards, not resting satisfied with the achievements of the past, but deeply conscious of the problems which we have to face in the present, and of the difficulties which we have to overcome in the future. Convinced of this, we welcome all the teaching we can receive. We ask that we may be shown how we may discharge our duties better. We beg that the seriousness of our responsibilities may be brought home to our minds. We do not refuse to undertake great tasks or to face onerous obligations. We only ask that we may be convinced, assured, that we may see our duty clearly, and then, in all humility, we shall be ready to accept the obligations that are brought home to us.

I need hardly dwell on the importance of the subject that is to be brought before our attention this week; but here in this place there are one or two considerations which I should like to lay before you—considerations bearing on the religious spirit with which we ought to enter upon our hearing, or our teaching, in the week that begins to-day.

The question of the organisation of the common life is one which increasingly comes home to us. More

and more does it become an object of general concern that the common life should be organised well, and in a healthy way, so that every human being may have his due share of the great gifts which God bestows upon all men. But we have to admit that the rapid development of modern days, all that we proudly speak of as progress, as civilisation and the advance of industry, has done much to deprive the great mass of Englishmen of many blessings which they enjoyed in simpler times. I take it that it is the highest glory of the Sanitary Institute to recognise this grievance and try to remove it. It tells us that modern progress has been bought at a heavy price. It has done ill as well as good; it owes a compensation for the evils which it has wrought. Industry and commerce sacrifice many victims to their progress. It is for us to do our best that the sacrifice should not be excessive, that the good of the few should not be procured at the sacrifice of the many. We have to consider in what way we can make compensation for the evils which our industrial system unavoidably inflicts upon a great number of our population.

God made the world and took pleasure therein. God spread a covering of free pure air, which all admit that every one should enjoy. Aye, but modern industry, remember, has poisoned that clear air of God, has filled it with fumes pestilential and detrimental to the health of many who are compelled to live within their reach. God made the water to trickle from

many fountains, and gather into the streams that flow into the rivers. God sent it forth pure and clear, a refreshment unto man. Modern industry has polluted the sources of our streams, has filled them with noxious products, has rendered them turbid and discoloured, no longer a joy to the eye, no longer fitted to supply man's needs. Modern industry has drawn men to live together in greater masses than ever before, and by bringing men together in masses has brought about conditions which are in many cases hurtful to health, and which in all cases tend to rob life of its simple and natural pleasures.

This is the subject which you have undertaken to consider, which is of universal concern—how these wrongs may be remedied, how clear air may again carry health into the lungs, how our water may again be made pure and refreshing to the weary and the toiler, how the surroundings of life may be made decent, so that life itself may be healthful and pure. These are great questions. Surely, they appeal to the natural sense of justice in every man. Surely, how to organise our common life, so that every man may enjoy those great boons of nature which he was born to possess, is a question to which, as Christian men, we ought to give our most serious attention.

But yet another thought; we speak of the progress of science, we are proud of it. But have you thought of the responsibilities which the growth of knowledge brings to every man? The clearer knowledge of the

laws of Nature; what is this but a perpetual revelation of God's purposes to man? The contents of that revelation are assuredly binding on our consciences and form part of our duty as Christians. Whatever science shows us to be true has a claim upon our attention, and ought to influence our actions. Remember the answer of Jesus to the question, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither did this man sin nor his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him." The cause of affliction and ill-health is not to be found, as of old it was found, entirely in the sin or offence of the sufferer or his ancestors. Suffering and affliction are a manifestation of the works of God, and we recognise God's call to us as individuals when we have to face illness. All manifestations of God's works call for a corresponding effort on our part; and when science demonstrates the causes of ill-health, it makes an addition to human knowledge, which involves a new responsibility both for our individual selves and for the common welfare. Every man has the right to live in such way that he can offer himself, with all his natural gifts and capacities, to God's service. Shall we offer unto God the maimed and the lame and the blind and the halt? Shall we not consider that it is our duty to see that all men grow up in the enjoyment of health and strength and vigour, that thereby they may be the more able to serve God in their day and generation,

How sad to pass along the street and see the pallid faces, the languid steps! It is a reproach to us; these things ought not to be, for we know that they need not be. And if there arise any among us who can teach us better how these things may be avoided, who, with wisdom and with forethought and with prudence, can put before us means by which our common life may be improved, by which that precious gift of health can be increased and brought unto the humblest and the lowliest, then, dear friends, are we not bound to give them a hearty welcome, to listen to them, to value them highly for their work's sake, to accept the full responsibility of the message which they bring?

Again, there is the analogy between the health of the body and the health of the soul which St. John recognised when he hoped that his friend "might prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospered".[1] It is hard for those who live with enfeebled frames, amid neglected and filthy surroundings, to feel strong aspirations after the beauty, the purity and the truth of a spiritual life. The other night I passed through one of the back streets of this city. It was at a time when the workmen left their work, and when the street was crowded with many men who were hastening, some to their homes, some to their pleasures. And as I passed by, I saw a little group which consisted of three little girls of the age of four or five, who

[1] 3 John 2.

had been placed by an elder girl upon a doorstep that was higher than the street. There they were, ranged in a row, their little hands were folded, and their eyes were shut, and the elder girl, who stood below in the crowded street, was teaching them to lisp out the words of the Lord's Prayer. I thought that there, in that crowded street, was a symbol of the real operation of the work of God's Holy Spirit, that there was a lesson from which every casual bystander had much to learn, and then I thought of those fair young souls, like rosebuds opening in the garden of God, and asked myself what would their future be? Would the seed thus sown take root and bear fruit? Would those buds blossom with all the beauty that God could give, or would the canker worm destroy them? Would they perish there amid the evil that gathered round them?

The conditions under which life is lived, the unwholesome air of the factory, the crowded workshop, the ill-ventilated room, all those things that rob the body of its vigour, how they must react also upon the soul! You heard in the Epistle this morning of the works of the flesh—uncleanliness, hatred, variance, drunkenness, revelling. Do not these things, think you, come very largely from, and are they not greatly affected by, the physical conditions under which life is lived? If we allow health and strength to be slowly sapped by want of consideration for the actual physical conditions under which life is lived, surely we are

responsible for bringing ruin to the young soul, for not doing our part to clear the weeds from the fair garden of God, so that every plant that is sown therein by the grace of His Holy Spirit, may grow into all the beauty which the grace of God alone can give. Yes, there is much to be done. It is useless for us to fold our hands, and speak of our past progress or our present civilisation. The level which has been reached can only be maintained, and the progress of the future can only be assured, if we offer ourselves, hearts and souls, to God, and work our work in humble dependence on His will. It is as true now as it was in the days of old. It is useless that you raise your voices as guardians of the public health, unless God provides the attentive ear and the willing heart; for you ask both for prudence and unselfishness; you urge measures of precaution which are often opposed to self-interest.

Our common life cannot be built upon a basis of self-interest. No; our common life must be built upon the basis of self-sacrifice, self-sacrifice which God can bless. Our sacrifice must be brought to the altar of God that He may hallow it, before we offer it to the service of our fellow-men. That is the great reason of our meeting here to-day, that we may hallow to God all we have striven to do for the common good in the past, that we may ask God's blessing upon all our endeavours in the future. We have brought ourselves to Him, that we may ask Him that He will now lift up our hearts, so that we may see and know

what things we ought to do; that, by the help of His Holy Spirit, we may have that true judgment in all things whereby alone the lessons of science, and the teachings of wisdom, can be made fruitful for the eternal good of man.

XIV.

THE HOPE OF OUR FOUNDER.

PREACHED IN EMMANUEL COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE, ON 5TH DECEMBER, 1890.

Our hope for you is steadfast.—2 *Cor.* i. 7.

So wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians in spite of their grievous failings. Like a true teacher, he first administered a severe rebuke, and then pointed out the way to amendment. He bade the contrite find in the future an opportunity for redressing the shortcomings of the past; the impulse of present action was to be the consciousness that the eye of a wise and loving friend saw the gleams of a happy dawn beginning to break through the darkness of failure. He gave encouragement by the steadfastness of his own hopefulness.

Such has ever been the attitude of great men towards the world in which they lived. They have quickened aspiration by awakening a new sense of responsibility; they have shamed men into energy by showing them that they were trusted; they have stirred men out of lethargy by committing to their hands a mighty trust. Such, above all, was the spirit

of those whom we commemorate to-day, our founder and benefactors; men of lofty faith and clear vision, who were profoundly convinced that their generation, if true to its best knowledge, was able to grapple with the difficulties that beset its path, but that the way to their solution lay, not through the bustle of unintelligent activity, nor through the exercise of unthinking authority, but through the resoluteness that comes of thought and through the sobriety begotten by careful discipline of the mind. They may not have been men of great distinction, but they have raised imperishable memorials of their true greatness by their steadfast hope in the future, which was the motive of their bequests to posterity. It was not the ages of national exultation which led to the foundation of our colleges. They were the products of periods of perplexity and embarrassment. Those who founded them confessed, in all humility, their own inability to work a mighty change and set the world right; but they believed that after them a happier time might come, and their wish was to prepare an exercise-ground wherein the thews and sinews of their more stalwart sons might be trained to vigour, greater than their sires had known. They wished to remove stumbling-blocks, to undermine narrow conventions, to give fuller freedom to the mind, to make new experiments, to break down exclusiveness, to secure, if only for a few, the exhilaration of a new beginning.

Such was conspicuously the motive of our founder,

a motive which perhaps we are inclined to overlook. We are content to trace our descent from the "spacious times of great Elizabeth," and claim as our origin the national consciousness of the Elizabethan age. We tend to forget that the national consciousness of that age, as of every age, was the product of the steadfastness of a few individuals. We dignify their collective energy with the name of a movement, and then regard that movement as irresistible. But this is to miss the meaning of the lessons of the past. The force that displayed itself in the final triumph was the result of long discipline ; the stream of dashing energy was the product of years of careful storage from many a little rill. Before England could express its national consciousness, it had to acquire that consciousness, and the acquisition was due to the wisdom and the resoluteness of a few. Not in the years of exultation that followed on assured success, did Sir Walter Mildmay contribute his college to be a memorial of England's victory, but in the gloomy days of doubt and uncertainty, when no man could forecast the issue of the future, when the menace of the Armada hung like a dark cloud over the land, when schemes and plots were rife, when opinions were divided and no man knew friend from foe, when the most vigorous and healthy manifestations of the spiritual life of England were repressed lest they should add to the prevailing confusion. It was the darkness and despair of his time that moved our founder to make his venture of faith.

Amid the perplexities that surrounded him, he did not doubt of the future. What it might bring forth, he could not foresee ; but he turned his eyes to the best examples of the past, and acted according to the spirit of their teaching. History taught him that knowledge and virtue informed the world. He believed that the training of youth in piety, literature and the knowledge of God was the one effectual way to spread religion, refute error and supply examples of upright life. As the rivers that watered the earth flowed from the garden of Eden, so the fountains of knowledge which were to be opened in his new college were to flow like healing streams, bearing their freight of pure religion and holy living throughout the land. Such was the lofty hope of our founder—such and no less are we of to-day called upon by his voice to fulfil.

Sir Walter Mildmay's hopes, as you know, were pitched in too high a key to suit the prevailing tendency of his time. He did not endeavour in his new foundation to fall in with the popular taste, to follow existing models, or adopt the current limitations. He wished to break through conventional traditions ; he tried to remedy the monotony of one-sidedness ; he strove to provide a home for the less popular opinions, believing that energy, even if it be fanatical, and conscientiousness, even if it be narrow, are the most valuable qualities for a healthy national life. And it was that national life above all things that he longed to foster. No founder of a college

had a deeper belief in the beneficent power of education, or in the far-reaching influence of a character based upon sound learning. A missionary spirit runs through his statutes. Let men live and learn in his college, then let them go forth to influence the world. "We would not have any fellow suppose that we have given him in this college a perpetual abode." Emmanuel was to be the centre of a new brotherhood of learning and piety.

It is sad to confess that the college was not long faithful to the trust committed to it by its founder. It shrank from the responsibility of upholding an ideal, and after a period of splendid activity subsided into the position of an ordinary college. The temptation of being like other people was too strong for the fellows of the seventeenth century. They bartered their glorious birthright for the ignominious privilege of fellowships for life. Emmanuel ceased to be a pioneer of educational reform, and it was left for us of the present day to appreciate the greatness of our founder's conception, and to see his leading ideas revived and adopted by all the colleges of the University. The position of Cambridge to-day in close connexion with national life, the rapid drafting off of those who have been trained under its influence to the service of God in Church and State, the application of endowments to strictly educational purposes, these and similar changes with which we are now familiar, are only a reassertion of the principles on which our

college was founded, but which in days of lethargy had been neglected. Other colleges may have been reformed, Emmanuel has only been restored.

But though the main intention of our founder was ignored, it cannot be said that his spirit ceased to influence his college. I do not propose to follow the details of our history, but as we scan the records of Emmanuel's worthies one or two general considerations present themselves. First and foremost, we are struck by the fact that all the famous men who sprung from this college owed much, if not everything, to the education which they received, and to the influences which they here underwent. Other colleges may reckon names more widely known to fame; but in many cases their connexion with their college was slight and almost accidental. I think that Emmanuel can claim that all her sons bore decided traces of their sonship. Their characters and their pursuits were marked by academic seriousness. Even the most prominent statesman whom Emmanuel sent forth, Sir William Temple, showed a conscientiousness and integrity of purpose unknown amongst his contemporaries. The relation between the college and her distinguished members has been singularly close and intimate. I do not know that we have any conspicuous failures to deplore, or that Emmanuel ever acted the stepmother's part. Her work, if unobtrusive, seems always to have been simple and sincere.

Another thought occurs to us, that Emmanuel has been successful in moulding strong and resolute characters. We may not agree with the wisdom of their decision, but we must admire the constancy which led such men as Holdsworth, Sancroft and Law to sacrifice position rather than be untrue to their opinions. In fact, the early history of our college has much to teach us of the value of rugged resoluteness, and of the power of definite individuality. The world has advanced, not by the suppression of personal convictions, not by cautious search for a basis on which all men could agree to some colourless formula, but by the fervent expression of opinions which have been formed with a due sense of responsibility. Emmanuel was founded in the interests of free thought; that the prevalent form of thought which strove for freedom in its founder's days was puritanism was accidental, not essential to his purpose. The college was equally true to its first principles, when it trained John Cotton and Thomas Hooker to leave the land where they could not worship God in the way which seemed to them best, and seek a new home in Massachusetts; when it trained the puritan Holdsworth to abandon his first opinions, and conclude that there was more true freedom among the Cavaliers than was expressed in the deliberations of the Westminster divines; when it trained Sancroft to withstand an illegal use of the royal power, but no less steadfastly to withstand

what he held to be an unauthorised transference of the Crown of England from the head of its lawful possessor. We can sympathise with the sincerity of purpose, the power of self-sacrifice, the noble unworldliness of all these men, and can feel proud that Emmanuel was true to that great duty of a teacher, the formation of character.

But it is not by its great men that a college has to be judged. The greatest benefactors of the world are those whose names are unrecorded, who in quietness and confidence possessed their souls, who did their duty in their day and generation, and whose work was absorbed into the expanding life of humanity without needing any definite recognition. The summons to a sphere of labour in which actions come within the scope of history is given to few. But the street lamp is as useful as the lighthouse. "The education of mankind," it has well been said, "is like an Eastern pyramid on which each passing traveller has cast a stone." Most memorable, most precious amongst our records are the glimpses unexpectedly vouchsafed us of the high purpose which animated an obscure life. Sometimes, the veil is lifted for a moment, and we grasp the significance of small things. Sometimes, fame comes tardily to one who never sought it, and the far-reaching meaning of simple faith is set conspicuously before us. Few examples in the whole course of human history are more impressive than is that of John Harvard, whose only

record is that he was "a godly gentleman and a great lover of learning". It so befell that his modest bequest of a small library and a little sum of money served to recall the colonists of Massachusetts to the perception, that their common life could not be founded solely upon material pursuits, however necessary these might be. He spoke the decisive word at the necessary time; but that is the eternal mark of the true hero. The New World sought no higher title of distinction, but is proud to recognise in him the founder of its University system, and honours his memory with affectionate regard.

Again, who is not stirred by the pathos of the story of the poor student, Jeremiah Horrox, a name that ranks high in the annals of astronomy? He was a sizar in this college, afterwards a curate in a remote village of Lancashire. He died in his twenty-second year, having managed in isolation and poverty to teach himself enough to enable him to predict the transit of Venus in 1639, and take observations which were of great value for his science. Let me recall in his own words the spirit of an Emmanuel man: "There were many hindrances. The abstruse nature of the study, my inexperience and want of means dispirited me. I had no one to whom I could look for sympathy. I determined that the tediousness of study should be overcome by industry; my poverty, failing a better method, by patience; and that instead of a master I would use books. Armed with these weapons, I

would contend successfully: and having heard of others acquiring knowledge without greater help, I would blush that any one should be able to do more than I, always remembering that word of Virgil's :—

Totidem nobis animaeque manusque."

The secret of Horrox' heroism is not hard to find. It rested on a fervent faith in God which filled his mind with hope and aspiration, and which was fed by the studies to which he devoted his energies: "It seemed to me that nothing could be more noble than to contemplate the manifold wisdom of my Creator as displayed amidst His glorious works". To him God's service was the one great aim of life, an aim of which all others, however noble, were but fragments. The transit of Venus occurred on a Sunday. Horrox suspended his observations that he might say Matins in his Church, and entered in his diary: "Here I was called to greater duties which it was not fitting to neglect for these secondary pursuits". Well may it be recorded of him in the inscription which posterity has placed on the tomb of this heroic boy: "Loving science much, he loved religion more, and turning from the wonders of Creation to the glories of the Cross, he expressed the rule of his life in these memorable words: Ad majora vocatus quae ob haec parerga negligere non decuit".

Our Commemoration Service is at once a retrospect and a prospect. We look back upon the past

that we may find hope for the future, which alone can give us sustainment in the present. We are met here to-day that we may grave upon our hearts the lessons which the history of our college embodies, that disregarding what is trivial and accidental, we may catch the essential spirit of its corporate life. And that life is not isolated and apart, not the record of a few fleeting years spent pleasantly enough and leaving only a faint memory as a passing phase. It is a true mirror of the eternal laws of all the life of man ; it shows us in a little world, the everlasting principles which underlie the greater world in which our lot is cast. It shows them, moreover, more clearly than can be seen elsewhere, because the professed object of college life is lofty and is sincere, so that it cannot be obscured by false issues. We meet to-day that we may sing the Lord's song; its music takes within these walls a more intimate and a more appealing form, and its harmony is less broken by the discords of the world outside. How simple and how appealing the melody which tells us of steadfastness and hope and trust in God, which bids us by all the memories which it calls up to dispel our cares, our anxieties and doubts, to be strong in the sense of God's blessing resting on our labours however humble they may be, if they are done as offerings to Him, and to look forward to the future in trust and hope.

So then, I would venture to say to the older mem-

bers of the college whom we gather around us to-day: renew your strength among the memories of past years, when hopes were high, and life looked easy, and success seemed certain. Perhaps you have not done or been all that you meant to do or be when of old you loitered in these courts, or discussed the future with a friend. Perhaps you may feel inclined to smile at your youthful enthusiasms: they may have been exaggerated, crude, impossible. But call them back and cherish them; it may be they were a real revelation, the highest you have ever had. Their form may have passed away for ever; but the spirit of youthful aspiration is truer than the saws and maxims of worldly wisdom, and we can all, in some shape or other, do and be the best we ever felt called to do or be. The haunts of our youth, revisited with the sense of the added responsibility which comes from experience, are powerful to recall

> those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
> Are yet a master light of all our seeing:
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence.

And you, my sons, if I may call you so, whose clear vision has not yet been dimmed by the sense of failure or disappointment, think not that the ceremony of to-day is but a pleasant old-fashioned custom. Recog-

nise this college commemoration as an integral and important part of the training which you here receive. You are the heirs of a great heritage, and the traditions of your spiritual ancestry impose upon you the obligations of spiritual nobility. Whatever may be the career that lies before you, it gives you scope enough for high resolve, for a lofty sense of duty, for sincere self-dedication to God's service. The hope of our founder was steadfast for those who were to enjoy the benefits of his bounty. "I have set an acorn," he said in memorable words, "which when it becomes an oak, God only knows what will be the fruit thereof." That growth, he hoped, would be constant: of that fruit he trusted each member of his college would bring forth his appointed share. You are proud of your college; you are heedful of its good repute. Your duty to it does not cease when you leave it: your whole lives and characters and aims are part of its life, are the abiding testimony of its worth. The hopes of the past ages have descended upon you, and wait for you to fulfil them. They bid you "gather your faith together, and your strength make stronger". They point you to hope for the future, to the duty of labouring in your day and generation to hasten the coming of the time when

> Sweeter shall the roses blow
> In those far years, those happier years,
> And children weep, when we lie low,
> Far fewer tears, far softer tears.

To all of us comes the trumpet-call from the past, "Our hope for you is steadfast". Let us humbly ask in turn, "And now, Lord, what is my hope?" Let us not cease our prayers till we can joyfully answer, "Truly my hope is even in Thee".

XV.

THE HOME OF THE SOUL.

PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF ST. HILDA'S CHURCH, LEICESTER, ON 5TH MAY, 1891.

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.—*Ps.* lxxxiv. 2.

THE Psalmist, in that beautiful Psalm which we have just sung, pours out his soul, writing from some place of exile, we know not where. I will not weary your patience with discussing the probable date and authorship of the Psalm. It is enough for our purpose to notice, that the Psalmist wrote when he was driven by stress of circumstances from all that made social life dear to him. Far away from home, it was natural that his mind should turn back in tender retrospect to the place where his affections centred. It was natural that he should think of the life from which he was cut off by some stern decree, and it was natural that when he so looked and felt and thought, he should pour out his soul in song and in prayer. And we should expect, dear friends, as we in the present day look into his mind, that in such circumstances the Psalmist would regret the loss of his daily occupation, or the severance from his home, or the absence of the

sympathy of his friends and kindred. But it was not so. The thing that rises before him when his heart seeks Jerusalem, the thing which rises before him in all its stateliness, in all its majesty, in all its appealing grace, is the Temple of the Lord. This it is which he regrets above all else, more than home, more than wife and children, more than the love of friends, more than all that the world contains. The regret, the keen regret that wrings the Psalmist's heart is the loss of the courts of the House of the Lord. And why was that? Was it not because that House of the Lord was to him the visible sign of God's presence which had grown with his growth, had identified itself with his being, and had become the very foundation of his soul's life? That visible sign of God's presence; he needed it. It was quite true that he could pray in the desert of his exile, pray without the Temple, pray without its services, pray in solitude. It was quite true that he could do so. The Psalm that we have sung is a testimony to the fact; it is a splendid exhibition of the spiritual nature of the writer. It is quite true that the outpouring of the heart can be made anywhere; but none the less is it true, that the spiritual mind as it prayed by itself, longed to realise the communion of saints, longed to have before it the tokens and signs of God's presence, longed to have that nutriment and sustenance which comes from the established ritual of the Temple of God. The Psalmist had his spiritual strength, he had his force within; but the more

spiritually minded he was, the more he longed for the services in which his soul had been nurtured, and in which his spiritual being had been formed. In point of fact, if we look closely, the cry of the Psalmist—"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord"—comes to this; that as he doubtless longed for his own home, because it was the home of his body, so he longed to be in the courts of the Lord, because they were the home of his soul.

And is it not necessary in these our days to bring before ourselves quite clearly that man needs not only a home for his body, but a home for his soul? Progress we rejoice in, and we live under the beneficent influence of civilisation. All material advance we accept with joy and thankfulness. But let us remember this, that our thankfulness must not stop short in rejoicing over the good things that come to the body. It is as true now as it ever was that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. It is as true now as it ever was that human life is impossible without an ideal; that mere comfort, and worldly prosperity will not satisfy the cravings of the heart. For the time such objects may be absorbing; but the imperious needs of human nature rise above regarding them as being the sole contents of life. Man longs for an ideal, and the ideal of life is possible only in religion. No ideal will last unless it is permeated by the sense of God's presence, and that was what

the Psalmist felt. Home, of course he regretted it. Comforts, aye he was sorry he had lost them. But his thoughts and meditations rose above and beyond these outward things. Yes! giving them their meaning, giving them their force, giving them their influence over himself, he saw above and beyond them the courts of the House of the Lord. Beyond the home of his body, arose the home of his soul; and it was this he longed for, this he wished above all once more to see before him. "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord."

And that feeling exists in all ages. It exists among us at the present day. Last summer I was standing in a little country town upon a bridge that spans the stream that runs through it and gives it its beauty, and as I stood and admired the scene, I became conscious of a man and woman standing by my side. They were comparing notes concerning the changes that had passed over the landscape since they saw it last, and I could not help turning round and saying, "I suppose you were born here?" "Yes, sir," answered the woman; "twenty-three years ago we were married in that parish church. We were both baptised there and both confirmed there. On our wedding-day we left the church to go away elsewhere, and this is the first time we have had an opportunity of coming back to look at it again." I replied: "I hope that the twenty-three years you have spent out of this place have been as happy as the days of your childhood".

The woman smiled, and said: "Yes, sir, he has been a good husband to me, and we have both of us been happy. The Lord has prospered us above our deserts." There was the story of a humble life, which mere chance threw in my way. It was told me in earnestness and sincerity, and the thought which then struck me was this: how great a part was played by that village church. There they were baptised; there they were confirmed; there they were married; and there after a lapse of twenty-three years stood the simple couple again. They came upon a pilgrimage that was animated by as high and lofty a purpose as any pilgrimage that man ever took.

The love of his church, of the actual building in which he worships, is deep-seated in the English heart. The Englishman loves the home of his body, he loves also the home of his soul, his church. He loves it because he recognises that it is the symbol of his own spiritual being. In its fabric is told the story of his soul's progress from the font to the altar. When we come to church, when we look round and see the place where we are accustomed to worship, everything brings back to us the record of our spiritual life which we need sometimes to have unrolled before us, the record which we sometimes attempt to put on one side, but to which we must come back if life is to be real to us.

And so I would ask you to-day to think that you are taking possession of a home for your soul. It may

be a simple and humble home compared with some of those which have come down from the past; but for this very reason it has a pathos and a dignity of its own. Think of a newly-married couple beginning life. Their little home is perhaps in a suburb, built only the other day, not attractive as compared with the grand houses in the neighbourhood that have been built centuries before. But the young couple take possession of their simple home, and it becomes dignified in their eyes as the years go by, by the memories of mutual love, of many blessings, of varied fortunes shared together. Memories gather round even the simplest home and give it a dignity and splendour of its own.

And how soon memories gather round any place. As I entered the door of this church I was told of the death of my distinguished predecessor in this See.[1] To speak to you of him would be unbecoming on my part. I could not venture to speak of what he was to you. But I would ask you who take possession of this church to-day, to let me leave with you his name as a memory indissolubly connected with it. One of the first things which he said to me when he knew I was to succeed him was: "I hope that your very first act will be to consecrate St. Hilda's Church in Leicester. I am deeply interested in it—interested in it nôt only as a building, but because it is the first church that has been built in Leicester for

[1] Archbishop Magee died in London on Tuesday, 5th May, 1891.

some time, and I hope it is the beginning of a great movement of church extension." And the last letter I received from him was in answer to my request that he would be present and preach to-day. He said that there was nothing he would like so much to do, but that unfortunately his engagements were too many. I would ask you to link with this church of which you take possession to-day, the name of him who will be known in the history of the Church and State as the great Bishop of Peterborough, and I would ask you as your children and children's children are brought by you to this church, to tell them how on the day that it was consecrated, there were mingled with the songs of rejoicing the tears of lamentation. Tell them to remember how the sweet and bitter of life are inextricably mixed together; but how amidst all that befalls us, there grows up steadily a wealth of memories which lead on to the thought of the vast Communion of Saints, the thought in which our soul finds repose. Let the words which linger in our minds to-day be these: "They go on from strength to strength; every one of them shall appear before the Lord God in Zion".

XVI.

THE LESSONS OF THE PAST.

SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY AT CAMBRIDGE ON COMMEMORATION SUNDAY, 6TH NOVEMBER, 1892.

> My heart within me is desolate.
> I remember the days of old;
> I meditate on all Thy doings.
>
> —*Ps.* cxliii. 4, 5.

THE words seem mournful, and in marked contrast with the joyful Psalms which we have just been singing. But I take it that, though gladness and confidence may be the ultimate result of reflection, reflection itself generally begins from a certain sense of despondency and sadness. We ask questions because we need an answer. There is first the consciousness of difficulty, and then the effort to overcome it, before we can finally reach the joy which comes from gaining a solution. The varying moods of praise, perplexity and penitence set forth in the Psalter, accurately mirror the fluctuations of every human soul. Perhaps in the days of sanguine youth most of us felt our hearts grow warm within us when the strong chant of triumph fell upon our ears, and we responded most readily to the utterances of a people

who praised the Lord because He was gracious, and His mercy endured for ever. But as life goes on, I imagine that the Psalms which speak of individual trials and individual struggles have increasing interest for us. Young men begin by regarding their own lives as part of the prosperity and joyfulness of the world around them. Old men end by creating for themselves a world which corresponds to the spiritual experiences of their individual lives. It is because there has been sorrow that there is joy; because there has been doubt that there is certainty; because there has been a struggle that there is peace.

So I would ask you to-day to begin not from the thoughts of the greatness of this University, but from the heart-searchings and despondency which such thoughts may help to remove. I do not mean any definite or even explicable source of difficulty; but that general sense of tediousness and monotony which gathers round life as the years roll on. I remember being told by one who had been intimate with Wordsworth that one day he asked him what he had in his mind when he wrote the lines:—

> Delight and liberty, the simple creed
> Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
> With new fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:
> Not for these I raise
> The song of thanks and praise,
> But for those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings.

Wordsworth stopped opposite a gate in his garden and said, "I have often felt so downcast and bewildered that I have clutched that gate and held it fast that I might be sure that there was at least something outside myself to which I could cling". Does not this represent a feeling which all have in some degree experienced? There are times when storm and stress drive men from their moorings, and as they drift upon the boundless sea, they rouse themselves to find some compass near at hand by which they may direct their course. Such is the eternal drama of the human soul, ever repeated and ever new. No voice which tells us of its experience of such crises is devoid of meaning. All records of disheartenment and the means of recovery from it are precious.

So we may regard the words of the Psalmist as having a general application. We may weigh them in all their massive simplicity, that simplicity and directness which is the mark of analysis pursued to the utmost point, and so capable of clear expression. Life, he tells us, has gone hard with him, but the onslaught which overwhelmed him most, was that which was felt within:—

> The enemy hath persecuted my soul,
> My heart within me is desolate.

It is this sense of numbness from which he longs to escape. If he could only feel that he was up and doing, if he could only see some object before him,

all would yet be well. He casts about for a way of escape, for something to revive his inward vigour:—

> I remember the days of old,
> I meditate on all thy doings,
> I muse on the works of thy hands.

This is the process by which strength is renewed, and the springs of hope are restored. He feels his way out of his present distress by the recollection of past triumphs, and through the past he can reach forward to the future. He escapes from the crushing sense of isolation, by the companionship of those who had striven and conquered in former days. Reassured by the consciousness of that companionship, he can repair the ruins of his shattered life, and identify himself with the eternal order of righteousness set forth in God.

It is not my purpose to endeavour to fix the exact circumstances and conditions which occasioned the Psalmist's distress. It is enough that he was downcast and perplexed, and that he tells us how he strove to escape from his dejection. All men in some degree pass through such crises, and need to be helped against them. I would turn your attention to a form of trial which besets every man in some shape or another, a trial in overcoming which the real basis of character is exhibited. It is the trial of growing old, and doubting of the use which we have made of the opportunities of life.

Let me explain my meaning more fully. Young

men enter upon life full of hope and eager expectation; often with a keen consciousness of the failings of those who have gone before them; generally with a belief that their own improved equipment will enable them to surmount difficulties which have been hitherto unconquered. It is well that it should be so. No one would wish to damp the fire of youthful enthusiasm with the cold cautions of experience. We all feel that the experience will come of itself only too soon. But the first step that the young man takes in his career is the beginning of a series of limitations, which must thenceforth hem in his life. The charm of childhood to an interested observer lies in its suggestion of endless possibilities. Each step in the child's development removes some of these possibilities, and so diminishes the charm. So is it with actual life. The mere choice of a profession is of itself a limitation; and every step forward, however successful it may be, is accompanied by a sense of narrowing the scope of future effort. Everything that we do, however well we do it, however much we be praised in the doing it, makes it more difficult to do something else. Success, even more than failure, forges for us a chain of habit, and robs us of the consciousness of freedom. Further, besides this sense of limitation, comes also the inevitable disappointment of our hopes. However much a man may succeed, his success falls far short of what he expected. The critics may praise a book; but is the author satisfied? The praise is perfunctory: it is

given on wrong grounds: the real points of the book have been missed. Moreover, the book itself is far short of what the writer meant it to be. Or again, in teaching, who did not begin his work with a conviction that somehow or other he could make things plain and interesting? It only needed a little more force, more picturesqueness of style, more carefulness in statement, more sympathy with the average mind, to make teaching a real pleasure to teacher and taught alike. Who has not been driven to the unwelcome admission that he has overlooked the primary difficulty, the indifference, the inertness, the obduracy of human nature in itself, which refuses "to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely"? Who has not felt that he belongs to the band of children playing in the market-place, whose complaint against one another is, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept"?

So as life advances we feel the chain of habit growing heavier; we are conscious of limitations which hem us in; the wings of our aspirations have been clipped. Oppressed by the monotony and flatness of our daily occupations, with a diminishing power of outlook, with a growing sense of the difficulties and dangers of our time, and a decreasing confidence in our own capacity to grapple with them, with less power of sympathy, feeling that old friends are passing away, and that we have not the freshness of mind necessary to form new intimacies; we are conscious of

a growing discontent, an isolation, a weariness. Can this common feeling be better expressed than in the words of my text:—

> The enemy hath persecuted my soul:
> My heart is desolate within me?

If we would escape from it we have need to follow the Psalmist's example, "I remember the days of old". Such a remembrance is not a luxury, but a necessity. Our commemoration to-day is not an act of outward pomp and formal ceremony: it is an act whose purpose is to revive drooping courage, and bring healing to desponding souls. It is a truism that nations cannot afford to forget their past. The truth applies to smaller communities still more distinctly. To a community founded for the pursuit of knowledge, it ought to come home with overwhelming force. Every member of this University, young and old alike, has much to learn from this annual recital of the names of those by whose beneficence this place has thriven. He should leave this church quickened or consoled—according as his need may be. There is a consoling and a quickening power in remembering the days of old.

First, I would say to the youngest here present, learn the dignity of what we are about to do. You have been adopted into an ancient family of world-wide fame; you will hear a recital of some of the achievements of your ancestors—not those, it may be, who went forth on adventurous quests, but those who stayed at home, and kept up the old family house, and

cared for its repair and for its extension to the best of their power. Remember, as you listen, that on you devolves the duty of maintaining that structure which they reared. With your high lineage comes the obligation of nobility. This University, with all that it offers to you, did not come into being all at once. Century after century it was built up by loving hands with tender care. They were the hands of those who felt that, under God, they owed everything to what they had learned here. Their gifts were tokens of their gratitude. Their hearts were thankful because they had kindled here with a new fire, which the biting blasts of the world's experience were powerless to extinguish. You say with all good faith, "I, too, will always love my University, because my days here were happy". Ah, you must wait awhile for the test of happiness. Amusements soon pass away, and are forgotten. Nothing remains except what genuinely affected heart and mind. Lasting affection is only bestowed on that which purifies and elevates. You will not be grateful for long to your University unless you first allow her to teach you.

But I have said that our ceremony to-day, though full of meaning to all, gains in meaning as the years pass by. The names of benefactors have a familiar sound as we have had increased occasion to use their benefactions, and feel grateful to them for their foresight. Still, it is not the actual thing given which excites our gratitude; it is the example afforded us

by the temper of the giver. Some of those whom we remember to-day are names, and little else. Perhaps sometimes we wish that the roll of our benefactors was composed entirely of distinguished men. But a moment's thought will dispel this foolish wish. Learning is not the high road to distinction, nor is its pursuit the special care of the great ones of the world. Even in the ranks of students and scholars fame is capricious. Certain steps in the advance of a particular science are associated with certain names. All honour be to them, and may their names ever be remembered. But they, if they could speak, would say that others laboured and they entered into their labours. Because men loved learning, because they toiled patiently in neglected fields, because they were content to record the results of baffled experiment or observations, materials were gradually brought together which rendered the luminous generalisation possible, or led inevitably to the discovery of the new law. The lofty pinnacles of learning rest for their foundation on the multitude of simple souls who love knowledge, and pursue it without question whither it will lead, who long to prepare the way for others to know more. To me the unknown name has a special charm just because it is unknown. Of many men who are reckoned great in action, I wish that I knew less that so I might esteem them more. But he whose one memorial is his desire that others should have the means to become wiser than himself—how shall

I not praise him without reserve? Examples are useful as they are possible of imitation. To be great writers, great discoverers, great expositors—these were youthful dreams, and we grow old standing face to face with the little done, the vast undone. We shall not be great; but at least we may be faithful guardians of what we have received, anxious to hand down our heritage of wisdom improved in some degree because we were for a time its trustees. The record of little gifts, of new beginnings, of fresh additions to the means of study, of new professorships and new subjects of pursuit—it is a record of growth, a continuous process, in which we in our day and generation may at least be strengthened to take a silent and a humble part. It is not the stimulus of ambition that the student needs; it is the assurance that his life is useful and is not selfish. Sometimes there come heart-searchings and questionings. "I am here," a man says to himself, "teaching and reading as usual, without much definite result to show, beyond my own enjoyment of my work. When I look round I see that one of the men of my year is a member of the Government, another is a judge, a third rules a province in India. They have worked and are working for the world, and I—what am I doing?" The answer is given to-day. "I will remember the days of old." Look back upon the past, and you will see that the organised pursuit of knowledge has at least done as much for England as organised government or organ-

ised conquest. Work is not to be measured by fame. Fame is the coin in which the world pays those whom she has engaged to do her business. But though the world pays tolerably well so long as a man is at work, she is very sparing of pensions. A man's goodness or wisdom lives and reproduces itself in the hearts that he has moved and the minds that he has taught. A man's greatness ofttimes disappears with the newspaper which records it. The dignity and nobility of the scholar's life lie in this, that it claims no recognition and asks for no reward. It seldom admits of excitement; it has no prospect of great encouragement; it looks forward to no definite achievement. The scholar's object is to create an atmosphere in which nobility of aim may be fostered, to find and guard a height whence he who will may gaze upon a wider horizon, and see a larger world before him. It was because men of old times felt their arms strengthened in the tumult of practical life by the aspirations which floated before them, as remembrances of their days spent in Cambridge, that they gave tokens of their gratitude. It was because they wished, that those who came after them should be able to look with still clearer vision to the hill whence came their help, that they strove to enrich the University with new means of usefulness. Men of action are numbered amongst our benefactors, as well as the peaceful student who spent his life in keeping alive the sacred fire that here had been kindled in his breast. Each gift possesses a

peculiar and intrinsic value, for it is a token of the deliberate gratitude of a heart conscious of benefits received, a gift not given under a sudden impulse, but embodying in most cases, the old man's calm judgment on what had been the chief element in the formation of his character, the creator of what had been most real in his life.

Such is the testimony that comes to us from the days of old, a consistent and continuous testimony of what the University, its teachers and its scholars, have done for England. The roll of our benefactors affords an indisputable evidence of the deep feeling of warm recognition which some were enabled to express by definite gifts, but which multitudes in each generation felt or spoke though they were unable to record it in act. Our benefactors are but samples of the whole body of students. Their gifts are but the symbols of the thoughts and feelings of many hearts.

On what, I would ask, did these feelings mainly depend? I speak with diffidence, but in the course of a somewhat varied career, I have from time to time attempted to collect the experiences of different classes of men who have gone from the University into the world, and have looked back upon the impressions of the time spent there. Of course there was the remembrance of much youthful enjoyment, of much pleasant companionship, and of friendships which had ripened with years. But friendships would have been formed anywhere; those formed at college were

valuable above others because they were formed in an atmosphere which was specially congenial. The atmosphere was after all the important thing; partly it hung about the place, with its traditions and its memories; but I think in every case of a man who really loved his University, there was a consciousness that he owed his susceptibility to the influences of the place, to the fact that he had received a permanent impulse from contact with the mind, the character, the moral, intellectual and spiritual dignity of some amongst his teachers. Old recollections always come at the last to this point. A man recalls a tutor or a professor, recalls not so much the contents of his teaching as its method, quotes detached utterances which live in the mind because they were luminous, because they opened up a new point of view, and revealed an unexpected attitude towards life and knowledge. The readiness to bear with ignorance, the willingness to begin from what gleam of interest existed in the unformed mind, the reverence for truth, the patient labour for its discovery, the absence of prejudice, the freedom from current fashions of thought, the desire to penetrate to the reality of things, the humility which comes from long experience of the difficulty of attaining certainty—all these and many other qualities of the scholar are the really fruitful heritage which an English University possesses. This is the influence which is most powerfully felt in the long run, and exercises an abiding power. I have

found the feeling expressed so long ago as the days of Elizabeth, when Sir John Harrington, looking back in his later years upon an adventurous and chequered career, wrote of his tutor, John Still: "He was often content to grace my young exercises with his venerable presence, and from that time to this hath given me some helps, more hopes, all encouragements in my best studies; to whom I never came but I grew more religious, from whom I never went but I parted better instructed". This, in varying forms but in identical substance, is the testimony borne by those who to-day are the true nurslings of the University. They have learned from living examples, the dignity and greatness of a life formed on a love for knowledge.

It is this sentiment which inspired our benefactors in the past. It is to this point that we are led when we remember the days of old. This is the ground of the encouragement which I would put before you. It is, I think, needful to fortify yourselves in this conception. Modern life has grown more complicated, and so seems to be more practical. It is sometimes laid down, that the object of modern education is to fit young men for a definite career in the first place, and trust that in the preparation for it, they will discover some principles of life. It was not in the past gratitude for success that inspired our benefactors; it is not that feeling now which attaches men's hearts to this place. It is not the skilful educator, versed in

new methods, urging men on to run with skill and dexterity the race of competition, who leaves a permanent mark on the mind. Such men are to be found everywhere, and have their immediate reward, but leave little trace behind them. What men look back upon is not the advice how to get on, but the lofty ideal of life and character which was implied rather than expressed. The true possession which men carry away from this place is a life-long interest in some elevated pursuit, and the possession of a method which they can apply to its study. It is a respect for the nature of the scholar. No improvements of academic organisation, no changes of system of examination, no increase of studies, no extension of the influence of the University beyond its own boundaries will be of permanent value, unless they strengthen and develop the impression produced by the scholar's life. It is not the capacity of its teachers, but the dignity of its scholars, which is the true possession of this place.

I can only ask you to carry back your minds to the record of those who have passed away during the past year to emphasise what I have said. Our late Chancellor was a conspicuous instance to English society of the abiding influence of Cambridge. While he conscientiously discharged all the duties of a high position, his interest was in the pursuit of knowledge, and he was always ready to forward by his advice and by his liberality any well-considered scheme for that purpose. Pro-

fessor Adams, Sir George Paget, the late President of Queen's College, all embodied in different forms the force, the dignity, the courtesy of the scholar's life, and made its influence felt within their several spheres. The late Bishop of Worcester was a conspicuous instance of the influence of the qualities of the scholar's mind in a position of administrative responsibility. Men might agree with, or dissent from, the conclusions to which he came; but no one ever doubted the sincerity of his intentions, the absolute fairness of his judgment, or the large-mindedness of his utterances. Again, I will not be accused of unduly extending my record if I point to one who assuredly learned and understood the spirit of Cambridge as few have done who were not trained here. I mean the late Miss Clough. It was not by organisation, or by teaching, or by any belief in external means that she influenced others; but she understood the meaning of the traditions of a University; she embodied them in her own character and quietly diffused them in the College over which she was called to preside. Cambridge taught her much, and she did much for Cambridge. May all future extensions of the University be penetrated by the spirit of reverent wisdom which she displayed. And yet again, in the region of literature, is it too much to say, that the two chief influences which moulded Tennyson's character and which breathe through his poems are those of home and Cambridge? Did he not learn here that self-sufficingness which

kept him free from the temptations of success, which enabled him to set forth the simple dignity of a quiet life, and give voice to the purest aspirations and most constant ideals of his time?

Cambridge has reason to be proud of such a record of such characters, all markedly formed by the influences of her culture. We, to-day, may with thankfulness remember the days of old. But we should keep before us the fact that these characters were formed in bygone days, when the system of the University was simpler and more uniform. It is well that a University should extend its borders and grow with the growth of human needs. Indeed our commemoration to-day is a history of such continuous growth in the past. But each generation has to take care that the new machinery be moved by the old spirit. A University can have only one true motive power, a common zeal for truth and goodness. In the old curriculum, theology was regarded as the master science to which all other studies led. In a deep and eternal sense all knowledge leads to God, and only in Him can the abiding order of the universe be found. All that man has been, all that man is, the thoughts of his heart, the secrets of his frame, his power over the world of matter, his relations to outward things, all these find their one connecting link in the union of his soul with God, in the new creation through Christ Jesus, in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in rising,
If we wrapped the world intensely in one hot electric breath,
'Twere but power within our tether—no new spirit-power comprising,
And in life we were no greater men, nor bolder men in death.

As you look back upon the past, remember that your University has been strong because it had an organic life. It cannot degenerate into a collection of technical schools, brought together into one place through motives of convenience. Subdivide, specialise, extend, according as may be wise or necessary, but hold fast to your corporate life. It is for Cambridge to direct, not to follow, the inarticulate requirements of modern life. It can do so if it is true to its old traditions, if it holds fast to the example of those whom we commemorate to-day. It was not in days of national prosperity that the University received its greatest benefactions. It was not for purposes of immediate and calculable utility that they were given. Mostly they came in troublous times when the future was uncertain. But though all else might be doubtful, this at least was clear, that with the spirit of wisdom went hand in hand the spirit of courage and of sound judgment. Men who are in earnest about the truth, and who make no appeal to popular opinion, will not be found in the long run to differ much. No institutions have been so powerful in influencing national life and character as have our English Universities. They are the objects of the respect and admiration of thinking men in all other nations. They may not always have

counted among their teachers the most commanding minds of the time; they may not always have shown great literary productiveness; but they have kept alive the respect for knowledge; they have diffused a culture admirably fitted to the national requirements; they have given distinction to our national character; they have trained the men whom England needed, by providing an atmosphere in which a reverence for truth seemed natural. These large features they must steadfastly retain. It is for each generation of teachers to recognise their responsibilities to the past as well as to the present, and to say with all the courage of true humility,

> Though much is taken, much abides; and tho'
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

XVII.

A NATIONAL MISSION.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, 2ND MAY, 1893.[1]

He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them.—*Ps.* cxlvii. 20.

THE lessons that can be drawn from Holy Scripture are infinite. There is not one of the interests which stir men's hearts that it does not touch and illuminate. Its very form comprises every aspect of man's activity. History, politics, institutions, poetry, literature, alike come within its scope. It sets forth, in every phase of development, the life both of the nation and of the individual, and exhibits with surpassing clearness the principles on which that development must rest. We may turn to it for counsel at every moment of our life. No problem can be so new that Holy Scripture does not afford the material for its solution. Even the wisdom of the natural man has failed to achieve its own purpose, when it has disregarded the light which the Bible throws upon the growth of human society.

You will not accuse me of wandering from the

[1] On the Eighty-ninth Anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

object of our meeting here to-day, if I draw your attention to some points in the teaching of the Bible concerning the true meaning of national life. We may regard the Old Testament writings as records of the Divine method of dealing with a chosen people from which, in God's own appointed time, a fuller revelation was to proceed; but this does not rob Jewish history of its universal significance. A revelation is not an exhibition of things strange or unusual; it is the manifestation, within a definite sphere, of laws which are everywhere operative, and of purposes which apply universally. The history of the Jewish people is a type of the history of every people. The processes which it relates are analogous to the processes by which other nations have been formed. The patriarchal life of a nomad tribe is succeeded by settlement in a land which was not their own. A period of slavery led to renewed wandering and the growth of military power. Then came the period of conquest and settlement in a land which they won by the sword. The growth of institutions, the problems of government, the development of commerce, expansion leading to disruption, and then the difficulties of foreign policy—all these are features common to the records of every nation. There is nothing extraordinary in the main facts of Jewish history; what is extraordinary is the temper and attitude of the Jewish historians. They are not concerned with the development of national life, but with the integrity of national

character. They are not interested in the material well-being of the community, but in its moral force. They have not so much to say about the military or commercial triumphs of the Jewish people, as about their religious shortcomings.

And this is a very remarkable thing which cannot be paralleled in any other records of a nation's history. Past mistakes are habitually condoned; good is shown to come out of evil; triumphs are exaggerated; failures are apologised for; heroes are created; means are justified by the end; patriotism requires that the past should be arranged in the form of a continuous progress, culminating in a splendid present, which is hopeful of a still more glorious future. How strange to turn from the laboured apology of a modern historian to the abrupt and stern judgments of the Jewish annalist—"he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord". How strange to turn from the optimistic calculations of a modern statesman, and his fertility of device for remedying every inconvenience in the body politic, to the utterances of Isaïah, who cries—"Woe to the rebellious people, saith the Lord, executing a policy that is not from Me; weaving a web, but not of My spirit," and who saw in such political scheming only a futile activity "swelling out in a high wall whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant".

What account are we to give of such a temper, of such an unwonted attitude towards the world and its

affairs? The answer is clear. The Jewish historians wrote under a profound consciousness of a national mission. The Jewish state did not exist for itself, for the convenience or the comfort of its people in the first instance, but for God and for His eternal purposes. This was the standard by which the actions of its statesmen were criticised. The question was not, Did they satisfy the interests of the various classes of society? But, Did they maintain and promote the integrity and sensitiveness of the national conscience? No ingenuity in pursuing the public good could make amends for sins which lowered the general sense of righteousness. No increase of national prosperity could make amends for the degradation of the national conception of the supremacy of man's duty towards God. Strong in this belief, the Jewish writers were not misled by outward show, but grasped the reality of national life; and events always justified the truth of their predictions. They spoke sternly, but never hopelessly. They attacked thoughtless optimism, but they were not pessimists. They denounced many forms of contemporary activity, but they were not unbending doctrinaires, nor nebulous idealists. They faced things as they were, because they had the power of looking backwards as well as forwards. They appealed to experience, as well as to hope, when they asserted that their nation's strength lay in the consciousness of an eternal mission. God had given them a knowledge of His law: their mission was to set forth

in their national life the results of that knowledge. When they did so they were impregnable, because they formed part of the Divine purpose which runs through all human affairs; when they detached themselves from that purpose, they were left to their own devices, and paid the penalty of their rashness. "They look not unto the Holy One of Israel: yet He also is wise." He had given them the means of understanding His wisdom: "He hath not dealt so with any nation; neither have the heathen knowledge of His laws". God was the God of all the earth. It was not enough to offer sacrifices, to yield the soul to the emotions engendered by impressive acts of worship. No; God's law was universal in its application. It covered trade, and politics, and life. The people was God's people, because it knew God; and it could not hope to escape the responsibility of that knowledge. For that knowledge was the only truth; and every act man does, every opinion which he expresses, must stand or fall in the long run—not by its charm, its plausibility, its convenience, or its cleverness—but by its truth. And in all that concerns man's speech or action, truth and righteousness are one.

If we turn from the Old to the New Testament, we find ourselves in another atmosphere. "The kingdom of heaven," which Jesus came to announce, had no special local habitation, and was connected with no particular forms of political or social institutions. The children of the kingdom, united by spiritual

bonds, were to work out for themselves the life which was lived in conscious relationship with God, their Heavenly Father. This life could be lived anywhere; it did not depend upon outward conditions. We find principles laid down for the ordering and regulation of the Church; nothing that prescribes the form of civil society. National characteristics are mentioned by St. Paul only to be dismissed as unimportant: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all".

It is not strange that this should be so. The object of the fulness of the Divine Revelation was to set forth the law of the individual life as manifested in Christ Jesus, and through Him communicated to the individual soul. The period of national education, of which the history of God's chosen people was a conspicuous example, was past. A universal and eternal truth must owe its power, not to the form in which it was clothed, or to the modes of life by which it was fostered, but to its direct appeal to the spiritual consciousness of man. To the philosopher engaged in analysing human nature the state may come first in the natural order of things. To the religious teacher the two primary elements are God and the soul; on the establishment of an immediate relationship between them all else depends. First comes the kingdom of God and His righteousness: in comparison with the search for these all else is of secondary importance; and on the discovery of these all else depends.

Yet it would not be true to say that the Gospel takes no heed of national life. It only states that religion is directly concerned with the individual; but the illuminated soul is to shine as a light to the world; the purified soul is to save the world from corruption; the little leaven is to leaven the lump till all be leavened. But more than this; the whole tendency of the New Testament is to regard the existing social order as part of the Divine order of the world. Our Lord was "obedient to the law for man": He came not to destroy, but to fulfil; and so to explain, by raising to a deeper and a spiritual significance, all that had gone before. St. Paul recognised that "there is no power but of God," and enforced the duty of obedience to the civil authority, as to "the ordinance of God". The conditions of outward life were not set aside; the obligations of citizenship were not to be neglected; the higher duties of the regenerated life were to be discharged in society. The demands of society were first to be satisfied, before the overflow of Christian zeal could well forth to fertilise the barren places of the world. The Christian was bidden to be a good citizen—a patriotic member of the state in which he was born.

To put the matter in other words—the revelation of God's law made in Christ Jesus was made to the individual soul; and the direct teaching of the Gospel is to the individual. But men live together in cor-

porate bodies, which are bound together by natural ties. The conditions of human society are expressly recognised by the teaching of Scripture as being the expression of a Divinely-appointed law. God works in the natural world as well as in the spiritual world. His works are set one against another, and form parts of one great purpose, which we can only imperfectly apprehend. The course of this world, the aims of human effort, the struggles of mankind to better their surroundings, the organisation of common life, all that makes up civilisation, all that history records—are parts of a revelation which has its message to the intelligence and the conscience of mankind. And this we find indicated in the form of God's revealed Word. First, the records of a people, then the perfect life of the Son of Man; first, the discipline of the community, then the redemption of the individual. But the duties of common life still remain; only, under the new dispensation, the community is not so much the training ground of the soul as the sphere of exercise for its spiritual powers. Man may be educated in many ways; he may grow up under various surroundings; his development may be carried on under different conditions. No method of man's devising can with certainty dispose his soul to the acceptance of God's truth. The question about him is, Does there come a time when, either suddenly or as the result of a gradual process, that soul unites itself to its Saviour; finds its life is His life, and through Him feels itself incor-

porated in the higher spiritual order, which is God's? If so, the man has been raised to a new level, and has obtained a new power. It matters little where his life is lived—everywhere he is the bearer of a transforming, purifying, vivifying force. He may not have much fluency of speech; he may have little of the world's wit and wisdom; he may not be a skilful critic of passing events; he may have none of the qualities of a statesman or a politician; yet, nevertheless, he has a mighty part to play in the country to which he belongs, for he expresses the consciousness of a Divine mission; he is animated by a faith which looks beyond present disappointment to the certainty of future triumph. The zeal, the fervour, the faith of devout Christian men and women, scattered in little knots here and there, is the source of all that is noblest and all that is strongest in a nation's life.

Let me apply these considerations to the occasion of our meeting here to-day.

I have always considered that the British and Foreign Bible Society has a direct and powerful claim upon the sympathy of all Christian Englishmen, because it expresses in the clearest and simplest form this consciousness of a national mission. That mission it is useless to reject, and foolish to ignore. The facts of the actual life of a nation must be accepted by the believing soul as of God's ordaining; they are to be explained by reference to a Divine purpose; they certainly offer a Divine opportunity.

This belief neither imposes upon him who holds it the obligation of apologising for, or justifying, the actions of those who have gone before him ; nor does it authorise him to discard prudence and wisdom in judging of the best direction of the common life for the future. On these points men must judge according to the best of their intelligence. But while things are as they are, their immediate meaning must be apprehended. Among existing circumstances, the Christian is bound to live. Because he has an ideal end of life, because he strives to guide himself by spiritual power, he must neither withdraw from the world, nor must he neglect the opportunities offered by the world's activity. The spirit of Christian zeal can find a scope in all things; if it acts with the consciousness of its Master's eye upon it, it has power given it to refuse the evil and to choose the good, to transform without violent change outward circumstances, moulding them imperceptibly to a higher meaning, till the husk drops away before the impulse of the new life which throbs within it.

We may, then, thankfully recognise that it has been the mission of the English race to come into close contact with all the peoples of the earth. It has been the habit of Englishmen to wander everywhere, and to seek ever new fields for their spirit of adventure. The Christian Church accepts this fact, and strives to infuse into outward circumstances an inward meaning. The British and Foreign Bible

Society is the agent of the Church in this endeavour. It is our national boast that everywhere the name of England is known; that savage tribes in remotest regions hope for security under the protection of "the great white Queen"; that Englishmen penetrate into every land as the pioneers of progress. Progress—God grant that it be so—changes, at all events, follow in their train. Is not this the cause of many heart-searchings, the object of our Christian endeavour? Englishmen go everywhere: what do they carry with them? Civilisation, it may be said; but what does that mean? Does it mean that they inspire a desire for greater comfort, that they point to possibilities of commerce, that they direct and organise weaker races, sometimes organise them out of existence? No, we say, not so. Civilisation means a higher view of life and its possibilities, a growth into greater activity of the soul, enlarged relationships, a clearer conception of right. Where are these things embodied? How are they to be taught? The answer comes from every lip: "Only through the knowledge of the true God does man attain to his true self". What, again I ask, is England to carry with her? We of the Bible Society have our plain answer: "The Bible, the word of God's Revelation. This at all events; this certainly; this is a foundation for all else; this contains the spirit of our national life." All past experience shows us that, however much a race may spread, its permanence depends upon

its hold of principles. Nations have died away in the past because they were mere organisations for temporary utility. Success destroyed them, because it fulfilled their aim. The spiritual aspirations of petty races have lived and spoken through the ages, while institutions, commerce, luxury and comfort have passed away. The spirit of a nation is ultimately expressed in its religion. If this be lost, it cannot long survive. So long as England carries with her the Bible wherever she goes, she carries the justification of her presence, the secret of her influence, the credentials of her mission. She can say, "We come to you in the name of the Lord"; her greeting is, "Peace be with you". Moreover, she carries the means for her own judgment, if she be unfaithful to her pledges. She acts with open honesty by admitting "This is what my sons are bound to be; these are the principles by which they ought to act; read them, make them your own, and judge accordingly". We cannot act entirely selfishly, so long as we take the Bible with us. Let others learn its meaning, and make its spirit their own; then their opportunities will be equal with ours, and we shall have given them all that gives us our strength.

I do not, in saying this, forget that there are other agencies as well. The voice of the teacher, the example of the Christian life, these are also needed. But these draw their power from the truths recorded in Scripture. No comment, however excellent, can

take the place of the text. Men may differ—it is natural that they should differ—about the form of organisation which expresses most clearly the Christian life, and holds together most suitably the Christian community. But where men differ they are human, and do not transcend the limits of human powers of judgment; where they agree, they are under Divine guidance, for "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God". To all believers in Jesus, the central source of life is the same; they differ only in their human judgment about the manner in which that central truth can most profitably be set forth to others. It is a strange testimony to the utter frailty of human nature that, in their honest endeavours to work their own system, any Christians should treat the endeavours of others with asperity, or condemnation, or contempt. It is one of the great claims of this Society on the sympathy of every Christian, that it recalls us from the sphere of our own immediate activity to the consciousness of the deep spiritual unity which lies behind all systems. As human beings we must perforce accept our limitations, and do our work to the best of our capacity with the best tools that we can find. Before the manifoldness of the Word of God, we can but recognise our individual littleness, and commit the results of our petty endeavours to Him, Who, we believe, can piece together into a mighty whole the results of all activity which is honestly devoted to His service. The world's

confusion, the unity of God—does not the Bible Society supply a symbol of the link between them? The care with which the scanty elements of an imperfect language are collected that they may form a vehicle for conveying God's truth to a barbarous folk, is surely an intelligible sign of our belief in the eternal harmony of the world. And that belief we need to reinforce and hold fast, if we would walk steadfastly onwards as God's fellow-workers. Amid the din and confusion of the world

> We murmur—"Where is any certain tune
> Of measured music, in such notes as these?"
> But angels, leaning from the golden seat,
> Are not so minded: their fine ear hath won
> The issue of completed cadences;
> And, smiling down the stars, they whisper—"Sweet".

The Psalmist, under the Old Dispensation, could exclaim with exultation: "He hath not dealt so with any nation"; and could add, as a triumphant proof of Israel's greatness: "As for His judgments, they have not known them". We, with devout thankfulness, as we look back upon England's past, and consider England's present, can make the first clause our own. "He hath not dealt so with any nation;" but our ground for rejoicing must be founded on the spirit of that universal revelation which we have received in Christ Jesus; "for," we should say, "He hath called us to make known His judgments, even to the ends of the earth". Our greatness lies in the sense of a great responsibility. This national respon-

sibility the Bible Society emphasises with conspicuous clearness, and does its utmost to fulfil. When we consider all that it has done within the space of this century which saw its birth, we may surely thank God and take courage. Its services to philology alone would make it a subject of national pride. But these are nothing in themselves, and owe all their worth to the Spirit which inspired them. Without the motive power of Christian zeal, such labours would never have been undertaken. Nothing but a desire to manifest the Son of Man can impel men to toil, regardless of recognition, in remote and uncivilised lands. It is some satisfaction to know that England is not losing confidence in her mission. Last year it seemed as if interest were somewhat waning, and the funds of the Society showed signs of diminishing. This year, I am thankful to say, we have every reason to hope that the depression was only temporary, and that the Society's operations may soon be conducted on the same scale as before. But efforts must not be relaxed, for much remains to be done.

Let us realise the importance and dignity of our work. It is to extend on every side the firm foundation on which the manifestation of the Son of Man is to be made to the world, that it may destroy the works of the Devil. For Christianity is the manifestation of a Person—is the message of a Life. The subject of revelation is the Incarnate Son of God; of that revelation Holy Scripture is the record; and

to that revelation the Church is witness. But the witness and the record cannot be separated; they make no contradictory claims. God's Spirit deals variously with men, and souls are prepared in different ways for the acceptance of the truth. But the power of the written record can never diminish; on it all human efforts must be founded; to it all human wisdom must point; for nothing can be added to the knowledge which it contains. It tells of God's eternal purpose, it points to the great Restorer of human nature, the great Deliverer from the thrall of sin. The potency of its appeal is universal, for it tells how

> The Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought.
>
> Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
> Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
> And those wild eyes that watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef.

"Which he may read:" it is our task to give him the means of reading, that so every life may be an opportunity for the knowledge of God's saving grace, and every language may afford words to confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father".

XVIII.

PROGRESS THROUGH CHANGE.

PREACHED IN WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, 7TH OCTOBER, 1893, AT THE CLOSE OF THE BIRMINGHAM CHURCH CONGRESS.

He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.—*Mal.* iv. 6.

OUR Congress is over. This is the last public act which characterises our meeting. Many have already gone back to their homes and to their work. You who remain are here for a brief space only, that you may deepen your impressions by a solemn act of Divine worship. As at first you strove to gain a teachable and receptive mind by kneeling in God's house, so now you come to offer to God all that you have learned, and you ask Him to make it fruitful for His own good purposes.

The same act of worship, and yet how different the surroundings. How great the contrast between the parish church of a busy town, and the stately dignity of a cathedral. One fabric tells of growth to accommodate an increasing population, the other tells of slow and continuous work to set forth a memorial to

the glory of God. The parish church, however large, is the creation of man's needs. The cathedral, however much it may be used—and few cathedrals exhibit more multifarious effort than this in which we are now assembled—still bears in its plan the indestructible marks that it was in the first place designed as a monumental symbol. There are many minds which find the more homely arrangement of the parish church more suited to the temper of their devotion. There are others who find new faculties called into play by the poetic suggestions of a cathedral. Some seek to know God as He is related to their own souls and gives unity to life and duty. Others find that they are helped by the attempt to realise God in Himself, and so raise their souls by dim visions of a beauty and a glory which they cannot apprehend. These are rough types of different kinds of character, different attitudes towards life. Each of us may feel a preference for one or the other, but who would venture to say that either was intrinsically better than the other? Each has its own sphere of usefulness; each supplements the other. There is no real contradiction, no necessary opposition between them. He is fortunate who can lend himself in turns to both of these impulses, and find his life grow richer by what each supplies. There are times when meditation on one's own soul and its relations to the world brings God nearer to us. There are times when meditation on God as He has revealed Himself in the world throws a

new light upon self and its duties. The religion which begins from the individual tends to intensity and one-sidedness; the religion which finds its satisfaction in contemplating the universal tends to lose itself in the vain attempt to reproduce in earthly system the harmony of heaven. Introspection alone ends in moral narrowness; mysticism alone ends in moral stagnation. Both elements are necessary for a right balance of mind and soul.

This is obvious; and yet it is not too much to say that all the divisions which have rent the Church of Christ may be traced to the undue exaltating of one of these tendencies over the other. Men have not differed so much about the great verities of the faith as about the mode in which these should be felt by themselves and set forth to others. Men have not quarrelled so much about the contents of doctrine as about the methods by which truth should be preserved and expressed. "This is my belief," says one body. "It is mine also," says the other. "I propose, in consequence, to speak and act in this manner," says one. "I propose, in consequence, to speak and act differently," says the other. "But you shall not," says the party in possession of power, and from that unhappy determination many miseries originated in the past. Men met and discussed things ofttimes, as we have been doing during the past week. But, at the end of the discussion, came the inevitable decision of the majority, and the minority must obey,

or fight, or be swept away by force. And this conclusion was put before them in the name of that God whose whole dealings with the world are an exhibition of infinite tenderness, and patience, and respect for man's freedom, even when misused; in the name of the Son of God who came on earth to show the boundlessness of the Father's love, and to win no triumph save such as could be won by the appeal of self-sacrifice to the consciences of men.

You will say, "We have changed all this; it is past and gone; we have grown wiser". I hope this is so; but I have not much faith in the results of increased wisdom, unless that means also increased goodness. Wisdom shows us man's way, virtue is the result of a perception of God's way. We may act wisely through policy; we can act well only through conviction and submission to a higher law. So I would ask you, "Has your heart learned as well as your head by what you heard at this Congress?" Such a meeting is an opportunity for all of us; it is a great opportunity for those who, in the service of the Church, live lives of comparative isolation, those to whom, in ordinary times, new ideas come from books rather than from converse with their fellows. Ideas come with a new force when they are expressed and applied by the human voice, when they are seen embodied in a person and are felt to have moulded a character. By ourselves, working out our problems, striving to make the best of our gifts, we frame rules for our own

guidance, we set up some objects of endeavour to the exclusion of others. It is necessary that we should do so; but are our limitations immovable? Are they boundary stones or are they barriers? Do they mark the extent of our present progress, or do they determine the ultimate goal of our endeavour? We look upon the boundless realm of nature and find our pleasure in discovering new points of view, unsuspected beauties in things both large and small, both distant and close at hand. The exclamation of the Psalmist is eternally rising to the lips of man, "Oh Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all". Is this true only of inanimate nature? Does it not extend to the little world within, which is but a mirror of the great world of God? Surely a sense that "God fulfils Himself in various ways" is a necessary part of the equipment of the believing soul.

It is the great object of these annual meetings to deepen this sense, to reveal agreement underlying apparent differences, to promote good feeling, to strengthen mutual esteem. They have done much in the past to promote this happy result. I trust that you all feel that the meeting which ends to-day has helped you personally towards this end. For remember, that we are never wearied of talking of the exceptional difficulties of our own time. We speak of ourselves as living in a great crisis of the world's affairs. We feel that we are, on many points of social order, trembling on the brink of change. I will not

stop to consider how far this is true. Every age of which I know, always regarded itself as in perilous times, and was conscious of transition. Every age tends to look upon its own difficulties as exceptional. Crises are often unobserved till they are past, and great changes are often silent in their operation. It is not the change itself, but the readjustment after the change is accomplished, which is most keenly felt.

There was one great crisis in the world's history, long foreseen, foretold and expected, which passed with little observation, and was only recognised by degrees. It was the coming of the Lord—an event to which all the past led up, and from which all the present flows. God spoke unto His people, and declared the means by which they were to be prepared. "The great and terrible day of the Lord was to come." What was the duty of human agents? How could men be prepared? The words of my text give the answer and explain the work of the prophet: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers". His office was to promote unity by the removal of differences, which rested on misunderstanding. He was not to establish an outward basis of common action, but an inward basis of mutual recognition. The hearts of two generations were to be turned to one another. It was unity of aspiration which was to enable them to understand the future—not uniformity of practice or identity of method. And the cry when

it came, presented a mode of preparation which was within the reach of all men. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The cleansing of the mind's eye and watchful attention for the voice of God, these were the qualities requisite for those who would grasp the coming change. On these all could agree—Pharisees and Sadducees, Zealots and Herodians, Scribes and unlearned alike. All current efforts, all objects of endeavour would find a common ground, and be reduced to a common measure. Discussions of politics might still have their place, but they would be brought into due proportion by the aspiration after larger principles, which should solve old problems by setting forth a new attitude towards them. It was not that the problems were not real or important, but the serenity which comes from the consciousness of an extended outlook was necessary for their solution. Old things passed away, not because they were old or needless, but because they were transformed with a higher meaning. The men who were to grasp the extended truth must do so at some sacrifice of outward things. Their central convictions were to be strengthened by the gradual disappearance of some of the scaffolding on which they had been reared.

In some sort of way this process holds good of every age and generation. There is always a sense of change and its accompanying discomfort. Man forms his character upon some conception of the

world; facts do not bear out his conception. He works with an eye to some attainable end; that end does not come appreciably nearer in spite of his efforts.

> Nothing can be as it has been before;
> Better, so call it, only not the same.
> To draw one beauty into our heart's core
> And keep it changeless! such our claim:
> So answered,—Nevermore.
>
> Simple? Why this is the old woe o' the world,
> Tune, to whose rise and fall we live and die;
> Rise with it then! Rejoice that man is hurled
> From change to change unceasingly,
> His soul's wings never furled.

Is not this a true account of the unending problem of life? Does it not face us both as regards our own individual life and the life of society in which we move?

I am not speaking of the principles which guide our efforts. "My soul, wait thou still upon God: for of Him cometh thy salvation." We are sure of our basis, but we feel none the less the strain and pressure of outward circumstance. "Without are fightings and within are fears." The difficulty lies in estimating and accepting the position. We know what our duty is—to hold fast for ourselves, and to strive to make known to others, God's purpose for man's redemption revealed in Christ Jesus. But how are we to fulfil it? God's purpose is eternal and immutable; but man is changeful and diverse. How

are we to regard the changefulness and diversity of man? Is its root evil or good?

When the question is definitely put, there can be but one answer. The constitution of human nature is of Divine origin. God's call to every man is to rise above the natural to the spiritual; man's salvation is a process of spiritual growth. God's revelation was given gradually; through long ages He educated man till the fulness of time when He sent forth His Son. Human civilisation has been won by the increase of knowledge carrying with it a greater command over the external world. All these are truisms. But, though men admit them generally, they are slow to apply them particularly. The history of the Church, like the history of the world, is a record of attempts to assume finality. "Now that we have found a basis, let us organise," is always the cry of politicians. "Our basis is unchangeable, our organisation and methods must be so likewise," is the natural motto of the Christian. But human life is changing, human aims vary. Curiosity is ever asking new questions. Characters persist in developing in other than recognised moulds. Men refuse to be dealt with as masses, and crudely assert that they are individuals. Instead of being submissive children, loyal adherents to the institutions which fostered their powers, they turn round and become impartial critics. They say that the institutions themselves are "on trial".

Which of us has not heard the remark flippantly

made by some shallow brain that "the Church of England is on trial". She, our spiritual mother; she, with her Divine commission; she, with her splendid past; she, with her simple dignity—on trial? Yes; it is profoundly true. For institutions are like individuals. "Can it be," we may ask about ourselves, "that I who have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, I who am in covenant with God, I who am sustained by the life of the Lord—can it be that I can fall away?" The answer is, "All these things are strong reasons why you should not fall away; but your standing upright depends upon the use you make of your privileges". "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." So it is with the institution. The spiritual mother must educate her children to love her. Her Divine commission must not rest among her archives, but be operative in practice. Work in the past must be a motive to greater work in the present. Her task becomes harder, not easier, as her children grow. Their wants increase; their questions are more numerous; they are moved by direction rather than by command, by hints rather than by exhortations. Let me pursue my metaphor, and ask any parent if the real difficulty of parental experience does not lie in the transition from authority to influence. There comes a time in human relationship, hard to define precisely, yet inevitable, when the parent must become the friend, if he is to keep his hold upon his

son. As time goes on the son's life and his character are increasingly withdrawn from the direct observation of the father; unless there is sympathy and trust, the thoughts of the heart will never be revealed. What parent does not feel that this more difficult task of winning his son's confidence is higher and nobler than that of giving commands, because it makes greater demands upon himself, and calls for the exercise of nobler faculties?

Now this, I take it, is the exact point in the prophetic office which is emphasised in the words of my text: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers". Such was to be the preparation for the Gospel message. The old and the new were to be joined together by the creation of that spiritual sympathy which harmonises differences. It is spiritual sympathy alone which can turn change into progress. Change assuredly there will be. New questions will be asked, and men will try to answer them. New ideals will arise, and men will try to give them effect. The process will be difficult anyhow; shall it also be disastrous? All depends on the conduct of the holders of a Divine commission. For we cannot forget the stern warning with which the prophecy of the Old Testament is closed: "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse". God will come: His purpose is fixed. But what will be the result of His coming? Every revelation involves a responsibility, alike

on those who reject it, and on those who accept it. If it is not entirely a blessing, it is partly a curse. Those who speak and act for God must "know what manner of spirit they are of". They must try to grasp not only God's message to themselves, but also its meaning to the world. They must feel some answering thrill to the long-suffering and patience of the Most High.

Our Congress will have missed its object if it has not helped us in some degree towards this end. If there is anything exceptional in our own day, it is that in every relationship of public or private life, authority is diminishing and the power of influence is increasing. Men are strong in proportion to the strength of their convictions. He who has a firm grasp of great principles—and surely that is the Christian's claim—can apply them with the greatest flexibility. St. Paul had an answer to all the temporary problems that were laid before him. Conditions have changed, but the value of his answers remains, because they were fruitful applications of eternal truths. He was careful to allow latitude, to recognise differences of enlightenment, to respect sensitiveness of conscience, to take account of present distress, to observe proportion, to abstain from minute injunctions. We see in him the power of Christian sympathy to overthrow needless barriers. We see the process by which "the heart of the fathers could be turned to the children, and the heart of the children

to their fathers". We see how carefully the great apostle of the Gentiles could respect the timorous scruples of Jewish converts, without sacrificing the great principle of Church liberty. We see how a powerful mind, penetrated with the mightiness and universality of God's revelation, could accept differences of opinion, and find room for divergent attitudes of mind. He protested only against wickedness and intolerance, against those who narrowed the meaning of the Gospel to suit their own prejudices, or who abused its liberty to introduce disorder.

Nothing is more striking in the records of St. Paul's activity than the courage and hopefulness which he always displayed. His life was full of disappointments; he met with much ingratitude; he was subjected to personal attacks from unexpected quarters. His lofty attitude of mind was not so acceptable to his converts as the narrow systems of smaller men. He pointed to a mighty future, to the endless possibilities of a regenerate life. It was easier to move contentedly in the smaller sphere of punctilious observances. No man can have felt more keenly than he did the pettiness of human nature, even in good men who had made great sacrifices for conscience' sake. Yet he never despaired. The world was God's world, however much it might be in bondage to sin. He faced it as it was, and strove to grapple with its manifold weaknesses.

He faced the world as it was: this is the true atti-

tude of prophet and apostle, of every one who undertakes to speak or work for God. We may not turn our eyes away from it, or attempt to limit its questions to those which we are able to answer. Not without God's knowledge do its problems come into articulate form. We have been trying this week to appreciate some of them. Have we learned something of the temper in which they should be approached?

For it is our temper that will help us more than our logic. We have to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers—not their heads. Hearts purged from selfishness and dedicated to God can never disagree save in opinion; and that opinion will prevail in pious minds which reaches nearest to the apprehension of the long-suffering of God.

We tend, I think, to make too many apologies for the supposed defects of the Church of England; its want of discipline; its absence of positive definition on many points; its large latitude of opinion. To me it seems that the Church of England is the only religious organisation which faces the world as it is, which recognises actual facts, and works for God in God's own way. It is attractive to resolve ecclesiastical order into a matter of convenience, and make congregational sentiment the arbiter of truth. But experience has shown that those who cast away as obsolete the organisation of the Catholic Church, fail to express the full meaning of the Incarnation, and its operation in society. It is attractive to establish

an imposing system which regulates minute details, and claims never to change. But we see that the utterances of infallibility are dictated by opportunism, and that supposed uniformity of system is a mere cover for subterraneous intrigue. The Church of England is rigid in maintaining necessary truth, and is careful to draw the line between what is necessary and what is a matter of expediency. Matters of expediency are not matters of indifference; they are, on the contrary, matters of discussion and controversy; but the controversy is not closed by any arbitrary exercise of authority. The sense of the Christian community is left to decide, and we cannot doubt that the decision comes ultimately from the working of the Holy Spirit. Different mental attitudes can find expression for their aspirations, and God selects those which are most suitable for His eternal purpose. We long that all men should agree; but we must learn to restrain our natural impatience. Such impatience is natural, as opposed to spiritual, when it leads us to establish our own opinion by striving to limit another's liberty.

The world grows more manifold; on all things the number of opinions increases. I trust that the time is past when any one wishes, for uniformity's sake, to narrow the limits of the English Church. Again I say, its proudest boast is that it faces the world as it is, and faces it simply and straightforwardly. It has no reservations, nothing which it need explain away.

The treasures of the past history of the Church are open to its children, and they are free to adapt them to the needs of their souls, provided they do not enforce as obligatory what has been deliberately left to the responsibility of the individual. The aspirations and ideas of the present in politics, in science, in thought, have no terrors for the Church of England, for its hold of vital truth has never been encumbered by the rubbish of falling scaffoldings and tottering buttresses, which threaten to drag the main building into ruin. The Church of England faces the world as it is, knowing that the world-spirit is strong and operative in many forms, resolute in maintaining God's truth. But it draws a clear line between God's truth and man's means of expressing it, however noble and beautiful they may be. God's truth, set forth in accordance with primitive practice—this is the position of the English Church. God's revelation of His eternal purpose, made manifest in the Incarnate Word, whose life is conveyed by means of His appointment to the individual soul—this is clear, and beyond discussion. The Church cannot parley either with those who would resolve its Divine message into a heightening of human morality, or with those who, from a desire for greater simplicity, imperil the fulness of the meaning of the Incarnation by neglecting to preserve with care the sacramental channels through which the Divine life is carried to man. But when once these fundamental positions have been made

good, there is freedom of opinion. The message of God is supernatural, but the point of contact between the natural and the supernatural must be open to adjustment. Men's knowledge of the supernatural cannot increase, but men's knowledge of the natural is entrusted to their own faculties. All growth of knowledge about the outward world, all efforts to improve the condition of man's life, are part of a secondary and progressive revelation, which also comes from God.

Each generation must face its own responsibilities for bringing its varied knowledge into harmony. Man in his feebleness and petulance wearies of the burden of thought, and tries to escape from it by erecting barriers of massive organisation. The attempt is always vain; what is of man's devising constantly falls into ruins; but God's truth remains, growing ever more majestic in its clearness and sufficiency. We of the Church of England have no ruined bulwarks to defend. What was of man's devising has been clearly marked off from the truth of God. This truth has to be conveyed to each generation in forms adapted to its intelligence, and by methods ordained of God, which correspond eternally to the needs of man's heart. About forms of expression men may be expected to differ. All have their uses; none can claim infallibility. To try and test them is a duty which a Church Congress enables us to discharge. Besides knowing God's message, we must know man's needs. I trust

that the past week has deepened our experience, and given us a firmer hold upon the meaning of our work. To "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," this is part of the duty of our daily life. It needs an understanding heart, and the charity which thinketh no evil. It needs hopefulness and courage. Above all, it needs a genuine faith in a living and loving God. Suspicion and distrust, readiness to impute evil motives, zeal for our own opinions, because they are our own—these are not Christian graces. We face the world as it is because we have a work to do, a work not our own, but God's. We cannot choose the sphere of our labours; God has assigned it. It is the world-spirit which tempts us to draw everything to our own level, to wish to make every one think and act like ourselves. Again, I say we have to turn hearts, not heads. It is the pure in heart who shall see God here and hereafter. God grant that we may all go back to our labours with a deeper sense of personal responsibility, with a wider insight into the greatness of the work entrusted to us, with a clearer grasp of the means by which that work is to be done, above all, with more fervent charity one towards another, with that quickened sympathy towards all men by which we can understand and interpret the inarticulate utterances of their hearts.

XIX.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

PREACHED IN PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL, 10TH MAY, 1894, ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEDICATION OF THE REREDOS, CHOIR STALLS, NEW ORGAN, ETC.

O Lord God . . . keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee.—1 *Chron.* xxix. 18.

THE history of the Old Testament is the history of a people. It tells us of a national life in all its ambitions, all its aspirations, all its manifold activities. And I think it is sometimes surprising to us, as we read the Old Testament, to find what a large portion of its contents is given to the building of the Temple. Doubtless this building was important, but was it productive of all the results which the large space given to it in the sacred record seems to suggest? Was it so important as to have such great care and attention bestowed upon it? If we look further, I think we can discover reasons for this, reasons which we can estimate and understand. We are told about the various stages of the work. First of all about the choice of the time in which the Temple should be built; not in the days of David, because his hands

were stained with blood; not at a time when the nation was flushed with the recollections of military glory, but at a time when all was peace and quiet, when men's hearts were still. Then we are told of the careful preparation; David gathered the materials in his lifetime, and set them apart, and dedicated them to their high purpose. Then we read of the care for the design of this building and the method of its workmanship, the blocks being brought ready for the work. So that

> Like some tall palm the stately fabric sprang.

Now all this care and deliberation powerfully affected the minds of the people; it was a constant parable, a constant reminder of great truths. And we see other important results which followed from the building of the Temple. Clearly it developed civilisation, and elevated the whole life of the people to a higher level than that on which it had stood before. First of all, it produced a deeper sense of national unity; then it engendered a spirit of sacrifice for the common good, and taught the people how to regard all that they possessed as gifts which came from God, and ought to be used in obedience to His will. Not only that, but great dexterity in craftsmanship was also created; a new school of art sprung up in Judæa; new capacities were developed for the service of daily life. Further, international intercourse was developed, and brought with it a growth of commerce, of exports

and imports. Thus with a little reflection, we gather that the civilisation of Israel was largely dependent upon the building of the Temple, which was not only a call to the worship of God, but also an expression of all that the nation wanted to do in every sphere of its activity. It was a monument alike of their spiritual aspirations and of their civil aims. There it stood, intermingled with all their being, with their politics as much as with their religion—indeed the Jew could not have separated one from the other—intermingled with all their national life.

Is there not a great lesson springing from this; do we not see in it the Divine purpose of civilisation, and the way in which that Divine purpose is expressed in the noble buildings which are devoted to the worship of God? Those buildings and everything concerned with them have an integral and vital connexion with the national life. They do not merely express the fancies of a few; they are not merely memorials of a past that has constantly changed; still less can they be looked upon as curiosities surviving from a bygone age; but they are the most vocal and most vital expression of national life and aspiration in every form. They are memorials of our civilisation. They tell us how it was built up in the past, on what truths it must flourish in the future; they tell us of the growth of national and civilised life; they bring to our minds a rush of memories greater far than the memories and associations that can gather anywhere else.

They must always be dear to the minds that will stop and think; dear and pathetic and full of teaching; aye, and of teaching that is progressive. You are accustomed to think of them as memorials of the past. I want you to think of them as connected with your own soul and heart and life. What was it for which David prayed unto the Lord? What connexion did he see between the Temple and the national life? "O Lord God, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee."

The Divine purpose in civilisation was recognised in these words. The sight of things precious and beautiful is valuable so far as it develops the finer sentiments in the heart, in the thoughts, in the imagination. David did not regard the Temple as exhibiting the national glory, or telling the story of the national progress up to the point which it had reached. No, the building was not to commemorate the past, but was to awaken the promise of the future. New, unthought of, unexpected capacities were to be brought out, capacities which grew from within, capacities which it must be the main purpose of human progress to develop. For what is civilisation? Is it the power to invent steam engines? Nay, is it not rather the capacity to think high thoughts, and cherish noble imaginings, which can raise the heart and soul? To what do we turn when we wish to be refreshed and comforted? We do not turn

to the memories of great conquests, of great heroes. We seldom think of the makers of the great nations of the past; but we turn for refreshment to the literature which expresses the thoughts of the heart of a great people. Then we are conscious of heart speaking to heart; then we gather the force of some lofty utterance, which shows that the writer looked into the reality of things.

It is by their literature, their art, their architecture that we judge the great nations of the past; it is in these that the civilisations of the past still live, and are powerful. It is these things that constantly improve the heart, stimulate the imagination and lead us onward and upward. Do you believe in the progress of civilisation? Progress does not depend upon the capacity for political change, or upon the power of adapting present conditions to the material needs of men. It depends upon more than that; upon the constant production of greater powers of insight, upon the onward struggle of souls here and there, who strive to see something never seen before, to speak some truth never spoken before, to reach a higher, nobler, richer and more splendid ideal of life. That is the true progress of civilisation. In this direction I would ask you to follow me for a little while this morning.

What is the object of our meeting here to-day? What is it that we have done here? What can this Church do for us? Some may look at it in an outside

way and think merely that it has pleased a few people to decorate it. Do you think that is all? No, those who have given their gifts to beautify this building have done so for the same reason for which David made preparations for his Temple, because they long, and long intensely, that the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of the generations that are to come should be purer, nobler, more dignified, more spiritual; that they should indeed prepare their hearts unto God. That was their motive, that was their hope, that is the meaning of our joy this morning.

Let me make the source of that hope a little clearer. What is it we see operating in the world around us? The law of progress. Is not that law a law of constant selection? Progress is not the progress of the many; it has always been in the first instance the progress of the few. A few are selected to a higher life, and they slowly lift others to their level. There has been no constant forward march of humanity in a body. There has always been the forward march of a few pioneers, who bring a message back from the new country which they have discovered, and offer to lead their comrades thither. The true ground of all our hopes for the future must always be that there are a few striving onwards and upwards. Our prayer must be that God may increase their number, strengthen their devotion, and increase the intensity of their power for this elevating purpose. Oh! if we could only get

a few people good enough, how much better all would become in a short time. How profoundly true is the saying, "Society is only maintained at its present level by the constant exertions of a few good men, and if their exertions slacken for a moment, society drops back like lead". This is the experience of the past. A few, by maintaining a high standard, slowly raise their reluctant fellows to their own level, compel them to accept their aspirations, steadily pursue their course, until they gather round them an increasing number, who are strong in the power which they get from the communion of their hearts with God.

It is a constant struggle—every individual feels and knows its difficulty—to maintain ourselves at the highest point, to act up to the best we know, to be as noble as we really might be. It is a constant struggle, and no struggle is maintained unless there is hope of success, unless we feel as we go on that finer qualities are being slowly called out from us, that our whole being is growing nobler; unless we find unexpected powers in unexplored parts of our being, things we cannot explain to ourselves, still less speak of to others, but which are there in "the imagination of the thoughts of the heart". That imagination is the beginning of knowledge, the thing that floats mystically before us. We try to grasp it, until at last it becomes tangible, and admits of thought; then it comes into our heart, and becomes part of our being. The imagination is the explorer, the pioneer that leads

us onward. Oh, my friends, do we not feel that life is useless indeed, unless accompanied by a sense of growth? Do we not long to advance in spiritual perception? And how are we to do so unless our spirit grows? And how can it grow save by an extension of our power? And how is that to take place except through an imagination inspired by God, helped by man, and by everything man can devise to lead us on.

> But all the world's coarse thumb
> And finger failed to plumb
> So passed in making up the main account:
> All instincts immature,
> All purposes unsure,
> That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.
> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Yes, the most important part of life is the development in us of what we feel, but cannot well express. Our growth is in that, the most Divine part of our being. All those emotions and imaginations of the thoughts of our hearts, they make up more of what we really are than do our busy activities, the words we utter, the deeds we do. And of these imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, this building, with all its lovely power of subtle suggestiveness, is the natural home. It is to express the imagination of the thoughts of the heart that these offerings, which we are taking

possession of to-day, have been made; beauty rendering back to beauty the expression of the subtle charm of a character. How are we to commemorate this charm of human personality? How are we to symbolise it, except in some beautiful form, which may speak in its time to some heart, and kindle some imagination of the thoughts of the heart in others? "God is a Spirit," it is true, "and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "God is a Spirit," but His spirit dwells with men. God is not apart from this life of ours, but He reveals Himself to us in it. In our actual life, in our thoughts, in our aspirations, there do we find God, ever present with us and ever speaking to us. "God is a Spirit," but He is not to be found—men have tried in vain to find Him—by withdrawing from the world, by forming a world of their own distinct from their fellows. "God is a Spirit," but this spirit does not reveal itself to austerity, to those who deny the actual facts of life, to those who refuse to enter upon that heritage of civilisation which we believe comes from God, and is in accord with His Divine purpose for men. God's work is a constant work of selection, selecting qualities from the individual. What is the experience of the soul which submits itself to the work of God's Holy Spirit? Does it not feel that spirit seeking out and trying its natural qualities, bidding it cultivate this and repress that? It is by this constant process of selection that the spiritual life develops. And if it is so in this life

of ours in the world, is it not so in the Church? We like to picture the Church to ourselves as universal, as coextensive with the world, and it is possible that in God's good time it may be so; but it has never been so in the past, in any nation. The work of the Church is a work of selection; the Spirit of God draws together a chosen body, who are a representation to mankind of God's purpose and lofty wisdom. And the representation of that select body, with its beautiful and lofty ideal of worship, does not belong to any particular mode of thought. It has been felt always: no one expressed it in more stately phrase, or felt its power more strongly and deeply, than did Milton, our great Puritan poet. You know the lines:—

> But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloisters' pale,
> And love the high embowèd roof
> With antique pillars massy proof
> And storied windows richly dight
> Casting a dim religious light:
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voiced choir below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may, with sweetness through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies
> And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.

"Dissolve me into ecstasies and bring all heaven before my eyes"—what is it but the echo, in another age, of the prayer of David: "O Lord God, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee".

God's revelation has been a progressive revelation in the past. It is a progressive revelation still; progressive not only to the world but to the individual. It calls out continually—the voice of God is always calling out—finer qualities; it constantly strikes new strings within our being, which vibrate at first with a low and plaintive note; a note too low and fine to be incorporated into the world's music, yet rich with promise of melody in the future. And this strange, soft, sweet utterance struggles into consciousness amid the subtle suggestions of God's house, till it becomes a force which can move the world. So it was of old. The prophets of the Old Testament drew their inspiration largely from the Temple. Think only of that splendid vision of Isaiah when "he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple". Then it was that he heard the voice, that low voice which is perpetually speaking, the voice which says, "Whom shall I send and who will go for Me?" Success in life, my friends, success in our spiritual life depends upon hearing that voice and upon being ready to answer. Then the soul which has been touched by God, the soul which has its imaginations ready and has been fed and nurtured by them, crystallises all at once the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, and, conscious at last of new power to meet new needs, answers in trembling accents, "Here am I, send me".

Is that process not a picture of something which

may have happened in your own souls? Do not these memorials which we have dedicated to-day speak to us of lives renewed by Christ, of characters strong in their simplicity, which shed a subtle charm wherever they went, which insensibly kindled thought and engendered imaginings which led beyond the actual present, opened out possibilities of hope before undreamed of? God's selection, which by revealing in the light of the life of the Lord Jesus new aspects of human character, new spheres of human action, new outlooks upon the world, constantly extends perceptions and quickens sympathies—is not this the lesson, the eternal lesson which every fresh attempt to adorn God's house must always teach? What we have learned and seen that we strive to express. There are truths which cannot yet be spoken, but can be only felt, felt until God's call is heard, and God's power is given to enable utterance. Meanwhile we can but cherish these memorials, ay and venerate this place, and pray this day from the bottom of our hearts: "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee".

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